

BUILDING BABYLON

A CASE OF RACIAL CONTROLS
IN PUBLIC HOUSING

The National Scene
SOCIAL ILLS, SCANDALS, COSTS
PLAGUE HOUSING PROGRAM

Also: POEMS, THE RIGHT WING



FOCUS
MIDWEST

72

Volume 8, Number 56 / 85 cents



Letters

COMMENTS ON CAIRO ISSUE

F/M: ... The Cairo material is terribly interesting and I must confess that I had seen and read it before we went to the hearings. It was good background reading and I'd like to think that some of the things we did in Cairo will help to improve a deplorable situation.

Maurice B. Mitchell
Chairman

U.S. Civil Rights Commission

(Mr. Mitchell is the chancellor of the University of Denver.)

F/M: I congratulate you and your staff on the thoroughness of the coverage of recent events in Cairo in Vol. 8, No. 54 of FOCUS/Midwest.

I would only fault you, or Mr. Boscarine, for the softening of the facts in his article on page eight concerning his experiences on December 5, 1970. There is testimony in the record of a court proceeding concerning the events of that day that suggest that the film in his camera was deliberately exposed.

John Blevans
Lawyers' Committee
For Civil Rights Under Law
Cairo, Illinois

COMMENT ON VOTER'S GUIDE

F/M: I have just had an opportunity to review Vol. 8, No. 55, of FOCUS/Midwest 72 entitled Illinois and Missouri State and Congressional Voting Records. Initially, I would like to complement you on the intent and format of this very helpful publication. And it is with the view to improving your publication that I call your attention to several omissions which I consider significant.

It should be noted that in your description of the legislative process in Illinois you failed to take into account the Constitution of 1970 which has expanded the prerogatives of the governor in the review of enacted legislation. I am pleased to enclose for your information a copy of our new constitution.

In reviewing the issues which you have identified as important as considered between the Illinois Senate and the Illinois House in the 1971 session, I am surprised to learn that you have omitted such major items of legislative consideration as lowering the age of legal majority to 18 (Senate Bill 931), no fault insurance (Senate Bill 976), implied consent (House Bill 245), drug reform (House Bills 787 and 788 and Senate Bill 177), State Department of Transporta-

tion (House Bill 1280), Transportation Bond Issue (House Bill 1277), revision of method of selecting delegates to national nominating conventions (House Bills 2492 and 2484), and any of the numerous proposals on the elections, environment, government reform, legislative procedures, bill of rights and the judiciary introduced to implement the Constitution of 1970.

The list is merely illustrative of suggesting several areas of substantial omission from your publication. I might add that all of the proposals which I identified by bill number were signed into law.

William S. Hanley
Legislative Counsel
Office of the Governor
State of Illinois

A Reply

(Editor's Note: In past years we presented comprehensive listings of key bills in Illinois and Missouri. This year we did so only for Missouri while for Illinois we cooperated with the Independent Voters of Illinois (IVI) who compile a record for the purpose of determining who the "best legislators" are. This means, of course, that they select a number of bills without any intention of making a comprehensive study. This was explained in detail in an editorial note in the Voting Records issue. FOCUS/Midwest inquired with the IVI and received the following comment on Mr. Hanley's letter:)

... SB 931/legal majority to 18: We took four significant votes (3 in the Senate) on youth issues, including ratification of the US constitutional amendment lowering the voting age to 18. Besides, the voting divisions on this bill weren't very significant: 43-6 in the Senate and 123-8 in the House.

SB 976/no fault: We were not convinced at the time that this bill represented a significant reform.

HB 245/implied consent: Same comment as on SB 976.

HB 787/drug reform: We choose HB 54 and 55 as more significant on this issue. Also the voting divisions were not significant. (E.g., 50-2 in the Senate, 153-0 in the House. The same applies to HB 788 and SB 177.)

HB 1280/State Department of Transportation: Same comment as on SB 976.

HB 1277/Transportation Bond Issue: We favor mass transportation rather than new highway construction. If we had been able to find an amendment to the bond issue that clearly expressed this distinction, we would have used it.

HB 2492/delegates to national conventions: The Senate vote was 49-0!

HB 2484/delegates to national conventions: We used four election reform issues which are more significant than the Senate vote, on HB 2484 which was 41-6.

EXCELLENT VOTERS GUIDE

F/M: Just a note to let you know that the latest F/M voters guide looks excellent, and really fills a gap in vital information.

Don Kornblat
Urban League
of St. Louis, Missouri

CORRECTION ON VOTER'S GUIDE

F/M I read with interest the recent issue of FOCUS/Midwest, and in particular the roll call analysis of Members of Congress from Missouri.

You have no way of knowing this, of course, but on roll call 417, an amendment to the election reform bill November 30, 1971, Congressman Bolling was presiding over the debate in the House of Representatives. This legislation was debated for three days under a complicated rule and very intricate parliamentary procedure. Speaker Carl Albert had asked Congressman Bolling to preside during House debate on this legislation.

As is customary, the presiding officer rarely votes on amendments when legislation is being debated. This is the reason Congressman Bolling is recorded as absent. Following debate on the election reform bill, Congressman Bolling voted for this legislation when it passed the House of Representatives later that day.

(Mrs.) Gladys Uhl
Administrative Assistant
to Congressman Bolling
Kansas City, Missouri

IMPRESSED . . .

F/M: Recently I was privileged to examine a copy of . . . Volume 8, Number 55. It dealt with the Legislative bodies of Missouri and Illinois. I must say that I was impressed.

Jo. Litto
St. Louis, Missouri

REP. LEON'S VOTE RECORDED INCORRECTLY

FOCUS/Midwest received a phone call from Rep. J. F. Leon in which he complained that we recorded his vote incorrectly on House Bill 2300.

We recorded that this transportation bill passed 89-34 with Rep. Leon not voting and Rep. H. J. Hyde voting no. In fact, Rep. Leon said, he was a sponsor of the bill and it passed 123-24 (June 25) with him voting yes and so did Rep. Hyde.

Indeed, the vote erroneously recorded was on the motion that Rep. B. Douglas be added as co-sponsor of the bill. Our apologies.

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IN THIS ISSUE

The lead paragraph of our introductory editorial for the "Cairo" issue (Vol. 8, No. 54) began, "The story of Cairo is ugly and hopeless." At the risk of being tiresome, we can repeat that judgment about public housing. What is especially devastating is the universal agreement among housing experts, political leaders of both parties, and even tenant leaders that past and present programs to help the poor and near-poor have failed and that no new approaches are on the planning board which may solve the housing dilemma.

The collection of articles on public housing and related problems, such as zoning, urban redevelopment, rental allowances, and others, in this and the following issue (Nos. 56 and 57) give our readers a comprehensive as well as deeply researched background not only on cities in Missouri and Illinois but on cities everywhere because the failures and despair are the same, be they in New York and Detroit or Chicago and St. Louis.

Harold Baron's article on the racial controls in public housing (page 4) not only gives us a history of public housing but also brings out how this program has been abused by powerful institutions and interests. The study is not only applicable to Chicago but to all cities which are manipulated by the same banking, real estate, building, and planning forces. Indeed, can any American city claim to be exempt? An overall view of the state of the many governmental subsidy and building programs is provided on page 28. It reinforces the Baron study.

Within a month you will receive the second of our housing issues. In it you will find a report by Russell C. Doll on the confrontation between the Kansas City Penn Valley Redevelopment Corporation and a weak neighborhood association, a proposed counter budget by Dempster Holland to the millions to be spend on transportation and airports in St. Louis, an evaluation of a new experimental rental allowance program tried out in Kansas City in which the author, William Jurkiewicz, was deeply involved, an article on the ups and downs of urban redevelopment in Peoria by E. L. Chapman, and a report on public housing in St. Louis by Richard Baron, as well as other relevant articles.

Our readers will forgive us, we hope, for dropping "Out Of Focus" and our "Editorials" for this issue only. Frankly, when we had to choose between these items and cutting the Baron study, the decision was easy. The straight press and the multitude of other magazines are full of worldly comments these days. The McGovern campaign and the coming together of the disenfranchised and the outs have even stimulated the habitually uninvolved in taking note. We are confident that you will survive the absence of our sage editorials.

McGovern, we are convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt, will be elected president in 1972, or in 1976, or in 1980. A McGovern-type president will seal into law the promise of the 1972 Democratic Convention. Indeed, we have witnessed a peaceful revolution. The rest, including the election, is a mopping up operation. The turn of events at the Democratic Convention are irreversible. It signalled that the Democratic Party is now in the hands of a progressive and knowledgeable leadership which will come to power - sooner or later. The New Deal, of which President Nixon is an integral part, has functioned well in its day but for some time has lost touch with contemporary moods and movements.

The new politics will inherit the monstrous problems of the past. Public housing is only one of them. One of the tenets of the new politics is open participation. If this approach can also be applied to programs such as public housing, a solution may be found which is both workable and acceptable. Harold Baron tells us that much in his concluding paragraphs. No matter how well motivated, how sincere, how knowledgeable, the liberal experts must stop making decisions for the poor and politically weak. They can submit plans but the decision must be placed in the hands of those who will have to live with the consequences of that decision.

We believe that the McGovern movement will carry out that mandate, will have to carry out that mandate if we want to keep all of our revolutions peaceful.

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BUILDING BABYLON

A CASE OF RACIAL CONTROLS IN PUBLIC HOUSING

by HAROLD M. BARON

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This study was prepared while Harold Baron was a research associate of the Center for Urban Affairs, Northwestern University under a grant from the Russell Sage Foundation for the study of institutional racism in metropolitan America. Currently, Mr. Baron is on the staff of the Urban Studies Program, Associated Colleges of the Midwest. "Building Babylon" was originally released in a somewhat different form by the Center for Urban Affairs, Northwestern University. It was especially brought up-to-date for FOCUS/Midwest.



Babylon is a major industrial and trading center in north central United States. It has the second largest public housing program in the Nation, exceeded only by New York

The Babylon program has the largest concentrations of Negroes compared to other cities. Overall, 87 percent of all the public housing tenants are non-white. In the nonelderly projects, non-white tenants total 93 percent. Ninety-five percent of the tenants live in projects that are 90 percent or more non-white

The Babylon program can be rated as very efficiently and effectively administered when measured in terms of fiscal solvency, occupancy levels, turnover, and property maintenance. However, if weighed in terms of human values, quality of family life, or the development of community life, it may be one of the poorest programs. Community facilities and services are practically nonexistent in some of the projects. The sheer scale of such projects as Cyrus Homes, with its 4,300 apartments is stultifying to the human spirit. Administration is heavy-handed. The family and child caught in such a social environment is living almost in a concentration camp from which he has little chance of escape.

More Than Shelter, A report
prepared for the National
Commission on Urban Problems
(1968), p. 132

Babylon is the thinly disguised code name for Chicago, bestowed by the researchers reporting to the Presidentially appointed National Commission on Urban Housing. The Biblical analogy aptly brings to mind thoughts of captivity. Thirty-three thousand families, comprising more than 130,000 persons, overwhelmingly black, are locked within concrete reservations that constitute the public housing projects under the control of the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA). Cloaked with smooth phrases of benign paternalism, the Authority rules the lives of a subject population that constitutes one-eighth of all black people in Chicago. In the last analysis, this rule is conducted according to an order of priorities in which the interests of the most powerful political and financial groups in the metropolitan area come first. Next in this line of priorities come the maintenance and aggrandizement of the CHA bureaucracy. If there are any options left in the situation after these prior claims are handled, the tenants' interest might bear some slight weight in what happens. This rank order of power over decision making provides a stark operational illustration of what is meant by racial subordination in the modern metropolitan setting.

Manipulation and paternalism are the distinguishing social features of the relationship between the local public housing systems and the black communities in American urban centers. Although the Chicago Housing Authority might be a somewhat extreme example of these systems, it is not a deviant case. In fact, just because the lines of its decisions and the functioning of its control are more clearly visible, CHA provides an excellent case for studying the underlying mechanisms for subjugating black people in public housing. While the reader should not look for exact parallels as to the nature of racial controls in other housing authorities, the Chicago situation should make him sensitive to similar relationships and orderings of priorities in other cities. Furthermore, the Chicago public housing system (and the manner that it interlocks with broader urban systems, e.g., the general land-use schema or the political structure) is analogous to the ways in which a variety of large institutional structures operate as racist mechanisms.

The Birth of Public Housing

The beginnings of any substantial American public housing program lay in the great depression of the 1930's. Viewed in an overall political sense, the New Deal era was a mixture of social reforms with innovations in state capitalism that took place during a period of profound economic and social dislocation. Often the adoption by the government of a specific welfare oriented program required the initiative, or at least the threat thereof, on the part of working-class or dispossessed middle-class groups. But the results were always confined to concessions and never extended to a restructuring of basic social and economic institutions. The dominant vision was not one of creating a new social order, but one of opening up the existing order to some of the people being excluded from its benefits.

The launching of public housing through the Housing Act of 1937 exemplified this characterization of the New Deal. Small-scale state and federal housing programs had preceded, but they lacked sufficient monetary resources and legislative mandate to construct any significant number of dwelling units. Housing reformers, trade unions and left-liberal groups, therefore, sustained a campaign over several years in order to push this new legislation through the United States Congress. In the course of the fight to create the Housing Act, real estate, mortgage banking and building interests had bitterly opposed governmental operations invading what they had considered their private preserves. This opposition helped to reinforce the aura in the public mind that the new federal housing program was a

great concession wrung by the little man and the dispossessed from the vested economic interests.

The new housing program was viewed by most of those who came to support it as a pragmatic effort at stability to get the society and the economy back on the track, rather than as a radical social departure. To stimulate interest in a public housing bill, the major national pressure group "appealed to any group that would give them an audience. They were quick to point out to each group — to public-health officers, to social workers, to laborers, to businessmen, to nurses, to architects, to teachers — that a long range public-housing program would go far toward solving their particular problem." The Congressional initiators of the legislation primarily justified it on the basis of providing work for the unemployed and clearing slums for the purposes of removing hazardous social conditions. The federal courts sustained the 1937 Housing Act on the grounds that it removed housing conditions inimical to the public welfare. Public housing in the terms of these official rationales primarily had the purpose of preserving the equilibrium of the commonweal. It was not construed by the authorities as some new political right or victory on the part of the poor.

From the beginning there existed some serious limitations in the structure of the housing program. The law as finally enacted was hedged in with amendments favorable to the interests of hostile real estate groups. No new housing could be built which would conceivably compete with units put on the market through private construction. Provision for the demolition of an equal number of slum housing units meant that there would be no net addition to the housing supply so as to maintain the demand for the basic stock of privately owned housing which poor people occupied. While the administration of the operating housing authorities was decentralized to independent boards in the individual cities, the ethos of the good government reformers who were influential in pushing the legislation led to the establishment of these boards in a form that was inherently paternalistic, with unpaid commissioners representing the "best of the community." This procedure evenuated in boards heavily weighted to conservative business types who were often not knowledgeable about or in sympathy with the program and not representative of the interests of the poor families they served.

A Social Crusade

In spite of these restrictions, the early days of the public housing program were often marked by a social crusade atmosphere borne along by the enthusiasm of the pioneer staffers. Considering themselves more as members of a movement than a bureaucracy, they referred to each other by the in-group designation of "public housers" and proclaimed their primary goal to be one of providing "good homes and healthful living conditions for low-income families." In the era of the great depression when the private sector of the economy was notorious in its malfunction, public housing did not bear the stigma of the charity ward. Being poor was not then considered a case of social deviance requiring appropriate social controls from the dominant institutions. The ruling norms of the day allowed that it was something that happened to regular Americans.

Nevertheless, the spirit of the public housers did have a missionary cast to it. Their work of uplift, while often requiring great devotion and personal sacrifice, was at least clouded by operating assumptions that the housers stood in a position of paternal guidance to people who could not make it on their own. By and large, the public housers failed to develop any political theory as to how and why they had gained influence and leverage at the precise time that they did. Rationality, good will and humanitarianism were held to be the basis for the changes much more

frequently than was mass political involvement, either actual or potential. In effect, they operated on the premise that the reformers and the professionals, not the people of their constituency, were the ultimate agents of change. Therefore, they did not foresee the possible social and political developments which would greatly circumscribe their mode of operation.

Given depression conditions, a great deal of informal social control was vested in the housing authorities through their management of the mechanisms by which tenants were selected. Largely through these means the public housers achieved their goals of serving the "submerged middle-class" or at least the "deserving poor." The recollections of the first Executive Secretary of the Chicago Housing Authority capture the nuances contained in that mixture of social reform, pioneering fervor, and benign paternalism, which marked this era:

Those of us who were with the housing program in the first period have difficulty thinking up any losses that could be counted. We well remember the surge of personal pride and community responsibility that swept over the new communities. This was true whether we did drastic screening of the families to get only good housekeepers and nice families, as they did in Cleveland, or screened 16,000 families to get 1,600 of the poorest families from the worst housing, as we did in Chicago. The sense of community responsibility created leadership that we needed only to spark. The projects blossomed with all kinds of committees to create health programs, play schools, and all kinds of recreational activities.

Managers reported — with amazement — that they could see the difference in the children after a few months of living in the homes. School teachers reported it, police officers reported it. We gathered statistics to prove it — statistics which weren't very scientific, I'm afraid, but which recorded the things we saw with our own eyes and felt with assuredness.

The moratorium on evictions that took place during the war made this period last longer than we had a right to expect, so our first families had plenty of time to put down roots. During those days we said that slum dwellers did not make slums and we could prove it. If we had any "bad" families and we did, they were inconspicuous and no nice family refused to move into a project because of their presence.

The combination of wide-spread economic difficulty even among traditional middle-class families and the subtle regulation of a highly selective admissions policy created a social aura for housing projects that did not especially mark it off as a world apart, either in the eyes of the housing authority officialdom or in terms of public sensitivity to the dominant middle-class values. A 1938 United States Housing Authority pamphlet, "What the Housing Act Can Do for *Your City*," proclaimed the standard virtuousness of the persons that it intended to serve:

The immediate purpose of public housing is to raise the living standards of typical employed families of very low income, who are independent and self-supporting but who have not been able to afford the kind of homes in which independent and self-supporting Americans should live. Public housing is designed to improve the condition of millions of working families who have reasonably steady jobs and reasonably steady but inadequate income.

Prior to the American entrance into World War II only 100,000 units had been built under the housing programs. Wartime placed new demands upon public housing. Legislation and administrative orders shifted priorities for both construction and management of projects to meet the needs

"The liberal and social reform types who had provided the leadership to the housing movement no longer had influence . . . McCarthyism and cold war repression finished off what momentum was still left . . ."

of military production. Permanent and temporary buildings were erected in locations convenient for the housing of war workers. The selection of these sites often out of necessity overlooked whether there would be any peacetime demand for these dwellings. Income ceilings on tenants — which, if exceeded, were cause for eviction — were waived for those employed in essential industry. War workers were given priorities that placed them at the top of the applicants lists. Further, conditions in the general housing market placed a greater premium on any available units as the swing to full production in the economy stimulated demand for housing at a time that there was little private construction.

The influx of returning veterans after the end of the war sustained for a few years the high demand for public housing among fairly diversified groups within the population. Temporary projects were set-up to provide the vets with shelter. A variety of social types could still be found in the projects — lower income workers, middle-class families undergoing a setback, unemployed, university students under the G. I. Bill of Rights, black and white.

New Priorities Emerge

Within a few years this scene was to change considerably as new priorities and policies came to shape housing and city planning in the stabilized post-war nation. The orientation of national goals was no longer directed to the objective of getting the country out of the ruts of a depression. The specter of possible political convulsion ceased to loom on the horizon. Neither big institutions nor men on the make had to be as defensive any more. They asserted themselves aggressively and saw to it that the powers of the state were exercised to their advantage, especially in matters regarding land usage and transportation. Most of the fairly large number of public housing units which received Congressional approval in the Housing Act of 1949 never were constructed as Congress failed to make sufficient annual appropriations of money for them. However, federally guaranteed mortgages did help underwrite the privately developed large housing tracts in the suburbs. Federal funds paid for the expressways that made it possible for the new suburbanites to get back into the city and encouraged the proliferation of the automobile. Federal funds subsidized the land acquisition for urban renewal to protect the environment around the central business districts and prestigious universities. Construction firms, real estate developers, the oil and auto companies, and other elements in the powerful urban establishments were well satisfied with these arrangements.

The average working man — the kind of guy who might have had a desire for public housing during the great depression or the war — did not object to this process either. As long as full employment could be maintained, he got his

pay-off in the form of a tract home with a low down payment and very long-term mortgage that was government insured. The new expressways for that combination convenience and spiritual alter-ego, the automobile, also added to his satisfactions of the moment. This group ceased to interpose itself politically except in support of very immediately defined material interests. The liberal social reformer types who had provided the leadership to the housing movement no longer had influence as brokers between the established order and the real or potential discontent of the above groups. McCarthyism and cold war repression finished off what momentum was still left among the most dedicated of reform and radical groups. The more typical individual from this orientation became cautious and introspective. If he was going to assert himself regarding any civic purposes, usually it was in favor of the kind of establishment institution that was profiting from urban renewal. Under these conditions, public housing programs became a lackluster residual function of other government operations. They were used to fill in when problems arose as to where to put low-income people when you could not put them anywhere else. The ruling evaluation came to be that public housing was second-class housing for second-class people. What group in American life has been more systematically designated as second-class than the black people? It is no wonder, therefore, that blacks increasingly became the tenants of public housing, especially in the larger cities. The racist subordination to which black people are generally subjected now made it easier to make public housing subordinate to the government subsidized programs of the slick, the powerful and the well-off.

In turn racism as an institutionalized form of control over black people has become a central factor in determining the way that public housing systems in the metropolitan centers have become oppressive of their tenantry. Most critics who have decried the nature of public housing have failed to place this point of racial oppression at the heart of their analysis. Catherine Bauer credited the bungling to technocratic mistakes in legislative, administrative and physical design. Elizabeth Wood emphasized that administrators were too concerned with modeling themselves after successful real estate agents and were not willing to adjust their approach to the needs of a population that, according to their norms, had a growing proportion of deviant families. More recent commentators have focused on the divergence in the class values of the key decision makers in public housing authorities and the tenants. Such liberal critiques have tried to conceptualize the problems of public housing as the malfunction of a particular institution or in terms of that institution being out of kilter with the smooth func-

"Public housing can best be understood as part of a well-functioning, pervasive, urban system — that of institutionalized racism."

tioning of several others. These approaches assume that there is an underlying, equitable social equilibrium which somehow has gotten out of order and has to be restored to balance. Such critiques, while helpful in many ways, do not zero in on what in the last fifteen years has become the key factor — the racist control of black people by the dominant institutions and classes in the big city. The liberal blunts the thrust of his censure when he organizes his analysis under categories of dysfunction. Public housing can best be understood as part of a well-functioning, pervasive, urban system — that of institutionalized racism.

Racism is Institutionalized

Racism as a social control system within the modern American metropolis is usually obscured by the way it is conceived both among intellectuals and in the public mind. While the protest campaigns, first of the civil rights movement and now of the black community organizations, have made it impossible to ignore the existence of racial oppression, the tenacity of the status quo has succeeded in confusing any accurate understanding of it. Explanations abound which attribute the process of racial degradation to individualistic and psychological factors — the behavior of whites is explained in terms of attitudes and prejudices, that of blacks in terms of deviance and deprivation. The implication of these prevailing conceptualizations is that racial frictions are only aberrations in a socio-political order that is essentially viable and able to resolve harmoniously these so-called maladaptations. Such thinking directs consideration away from the reality that racial subjugation is part of the normal and regular functioning of our major institutions. It is as though the prevailing pundits would have us believe that modern racism, like the British Empire, came about in a fit of absentmindedness.

In the metropolitan setting there has developed, what I call elsewhere, "the web of urban racism." It is a system of racial oppression in which the maintenance needs of major institutions, the status definitions of large sections of white society, and continuance of the social-political equilibrium upon which the power of the dominant elites rest are all tied together in the subjugation of the black community. Such a system is different from its predecessor the southern plantation system in which the economic exploitation of the black slave was the foundation upon which an entire culture and society was erected. In the metropolitan centers today, while many interests profit from the exploitation and manipulation of black people, the corporations, which are the hegemonic institutions there, are not predicated upon a special class exploitation of blacks. (So to speak, if all the black people disappeared tomorrow, Standard Oil would still be operating and making a profit.). However, since race is such a salient social divider in our society, the socio-political balance, through whose mediation these dominant institutions are able to exert their power in general, constantly demands a set of priorities which reasserts racial oppression. From the betrayal of the black man and Reconstruction in the compromise of 1876 down to the present day practice of Negro removal through urban renewal, northern racism has forced black people to give way to the complex of necessities which confront the ruling classes and institutions in maintaining the overall viability of the entire established order in a complicated industrial society. Individual racial antipathies are decisive over any extended period of time only as they relate to this larger whole. To the extent that they have entrenched influence, non-corporate bureaucracies, both public and private, operate through these same socio-political processes.

With this setting in mind let us examine the racial history of public housing in Chicago as an illustration of the

pervasiveness of racism throughout the entire system of institutional controls within urban America.

CHA, a Willful and Active Collaborator

On February 10, 1969 Judge Richard B. Austin of the Federal District Court handed down a decision in the case of *Gautreaux v. Chicago Housing Authority*. The site location and tenant selection practices of CHA were found to be unconstitutional violations of the rights of the black plaintiffs. The court expressed its fears of "the desperately intensifying division of Whites and Negroes in Chicago." In denying the defendant's claim that conditions came about without any conscious policy on its part, the decision held: "It is incredible that this dismal prospect of an all-Negro public housing system in all-Negro areas came about without the persistent application of a deliberate policy to confine public housing to all-Negro or immediately adjacent areas."

Yet, CHA had a record of adopting non-discriminating policy statements that extended as far back as 1947. The main line of their defense in suit was that they did not

"We have to consider the Chicago Housing Authority as the mediating instrumentality of more dominant institutions and classes."

discriminate. Any pattern of segregation was dependent upon the economic and political milieu in which they had to operate.

The truth of the matter is that the Chicago Housing Authority did not discriminate any more than the other major institutions that set the priorities and wield the bulk of power in the region. For it is these groups that set the framework and boundaries within which CHA could operate. These limits, since they were constructed with the prevailing social assumptions of the subjugation of black people, pre-defined the character of the Authority's racial operations. The truth bolstering the Court's finding is that the Authority had become a willful and active collaborator in the overall process of pushing black people around. The racist operations of CHA stand out so blatantly because it is the immediate controller of a large poor black clientele. Charged with mediating to its tenantry the impact of the large economic and political decisions that have been made in the interests of others, the Housing Authority ends up directly doing a lot of dirty work. It is charged with containing and controlling, within what has been defined as socially acceptable limits, the battle for survival that constitutes its clientele's daily lives. A racist society continuously creates frustration among the oppressed — and anger through its denial of sustenance and dignity. It demands of those institutions which directly deal with these frustrations that the manifestations of them be kept within bounds and that the oppressed do not threaten the smooth functioning of the dominant institutions. The means by which this containment policy is executed can range from self-sacrificing benevolence, through bureaucratic routineness to naked repression. All of these methods have been employed by the CHA at one point or another.

As in the black ghetto at large, the police have become a symbol of the general racist oppression, so in the housing projects, the housing authority becomes the identifiable discriminator. But that which is immediately visible is not necessarily that which is ultimately decisive. In this sense we have to consider the Chicago Housing Authority as the mediating instrumentality of more dominant institutions and classes.

The Framework of Policy

The broad frame of conditions that set the basic directions of CHA policy (or imposed stringent limits on it) can be delineated into four institutional areas: 1) The political structure, both in the aspect of direct governmental operations and in the aspect of those processes by which various constituencies are related to the government apparatus so that they consent to its legitimacy; 2) The major non-governmental institutions, corporations, business associations, universities, etc., and their controlling elites — in other words those organizations that are the most influential in setting the long-range goals of city plans and civic purposes; 3) The directly effected economic interests, in this case the real estate and mortgage banking industries; 4) The Chicago Housing Authority whether in terms of reform ambitions on the part of its leadership or bureaucratic maintenance needs. As we relate the history of CHA's racial practices, we shall take pains to point up the way in which these institutions interacted to form the broad outlines of the conditions and constraints within which the Authority operated. Powerful organizations were able to press their interests upon society in ways that gave general definition to the role of CHA — in a way that made it the visible container and cop for a large segment of Chicago's black population. Therefore, the racist character of Chicago's public housing program involves the full complicity of these other groups. CHA was not just an organization gone astray to become an embarrassment to these good institutions. Rather, it has to be broadly construed as carrying out their interest.

In the enumeration of the groups that defined CHA's directions, the reader might be surprised that the tenants of public housing were not included. This omission reflects the realities of power in the actual world. They have no commanding institutional base through which they can assert their needs and interests. Only through the modicum of influence that the tenants have in the overall political process do they have any active influence in setting the course of public housing. Others, whether under the guise of benevolence or malevolence, are always determining what are the tenants' needs. Aside from the general poor law atmos-

"Others, whether under the guise of benevolence or malevolence, are always determining what are the tenants' needs."

phere in which the society demands wardship as the price of survival, the racial aspects of this situation stand out blatantly. A black tenantry is manipulated according to the will of the dominant white institutions.

The Early Days, In the Spirit of the New Deal

For the first fifteen years of its existence the Chicago Housing Authority largely received its character from its original Executive Secretary, Elizabeth Wood. Born in Japan of missionary parents, Miss Wood was a woman out of the Jane Addams mold — crusading, courageous and incorruptible. Yet, one suspects that there was always in the background a certain patrician aura guided by a vision of re-creating for the urban lowly the organic community of the 19th century American small town. Under the Wood administration, CHA and its staff were acknowledged leaders among the housing authorities around the nation and a strong influence in the public housers national professional

organization. During this period CHA represented the best of the liberal reform tradition, and, as we shall see, shared in its weaknesses.

In the early days of the Chicago Housing Authority matters of race were not very salient at all. The black population of Chicago was less than one-fourth its present size. Since a high proportion of whites were poorly paid, unemployed and on welfare, public housing in the city was designed to cater to the plight of the poor in general. In fact, the racial status quo was accepted as the operating norm. In the absence of a large, well-organized black movement, the liberalism of the housing authority was limited to trying to bend these norms somewhat in a non-discriminatory direction.

One of the most used liberal inter-group relations techniques of that era was to develop a color-blind criterion and apply it to all individuals who came under its purview. This color-blind technique was employed by the housers. Under such a policy, it was thought that any controversial action could be justified on the grounds of being equally fair. Any charges of being particularly aggressive about the rights of blacks could be denied. This procedure avoided any direct confrontation with the question of racial discrimination because a racial label was not included among its criteria for making a judgment. However, the non-racial criteria employed invariably were correlated with race and provided a secondary mechanism for discrimination.

Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes laid down the rule for local authorities that the tenants of a housing project should not alter the racial composition of a neighborhood. While this ruling effectively barred black public housing tenants from white areas, it did meet a prior need in guaranteeing that black families would not be excluded altogether from these dwellings for which there was such a great demand during the depression. Bi-racial projects would come into being only where there had previously been bi-racial slums. The neighborhood composition rule provided a certain range of latitude to the local authorities which extended from a frankly segregationist policy in southern and border cities to the articulation of a rather sweeping declaration for full equality with hardly any accompanying action in New York City. Secretary Ickes' strong pro-black position was not connected to the minimal integration implications of his neighborhood ruling but was based in his insistence that low income blacks get a fair share of the units in public housing.

CHA willingly fell into line with the neighborhood composition policy. The clearance for Jane Addams Houses on Chicago's Near West Side, one of the three projects that the newly established CHA took over from the Public Works Administration in 1937, had displaced 26 black families. When blacks applied for admission to this project, they were admitted despite opposition from the alderman and some white groups in the neighborhood. But they were limited to the number of black families displaced by the slum clearance for the project. The blacks were first segregated into specific entry ways and afterwards located on that side of the project on which the black-occupied slums had originally stood.

Against those whites who wanted to exclude all blacks, CHA's management defended this policy on grounds of neutrality, claiming that no special racial concessions were being made. Blacks were getting back in housing units that had been taken away from them. CHA made a defense by abjuring any intention of righting racial wrongs. The fact that the other two projects received from PWA were kept lily white spoke loudly of the Authority's cautious position on segregation. When the white neighborhood improvement association in the vicinity of Trumbull Park Homes became agitated over rumors that CHA was going to move black

families in there, they were given the assurance that: "The Chicago Housing Authority, at the time of its organization, adopted a policy that had been established by the PWA Housing Division — namely, that the authority would not permit a housing project to change the racial make-up of a neighborhood in which it was located. On this basis, the Chicago Housing Authority has not, and does not intend to accept Negro families in Trumbull Park Homes." However, Miss Wood did expect that as the racial composition of a neighborhood shifted, the composition of the project's tenants would change. In this regard she wrote, "It is not our intention to permit the housing project to become an island in the neighborhood in any sense of the word." This was consistent with her desire that the public housing development should be organically related to the surrounding community.

Goal: Low Cost Housing not Integration

The biggest item of concern to black people in Chicago was not that of integrated housing but that of access to decent low cost housing. The ghetto was hemmed in by restrictive covenants, violence and social ostracism. Black families had proportionately fewer dwelling units available to them, and they had to pay more than whites for units of comparable quality. Doubling up of families, converted kitchenette apartments, and high rents reflected the black people's lack of living space. Therefore, the most important race questions on the agenda of the 1930's involved a struggle to get low cost public housing built for blacks. A three-year-long campaign of mass meetings, demonstrations and political protest was conducted by community and civil

"Bi-racial projects would come into being only where there had previously been bi-racial slums."

rights groups to get a large-scale project for black occupancy located in the South Side ghetto. On at least one occasion violent conflict took place between the police and black demonstrators. White property owners and real estate interests in neighborhoods adjacent to the proposed site opposed it with equal vehemence. "Protest meetings were organized, committees were formed to go to Washington to intercede with Federal authorities in an effort to get the government to abandon the project designed to benefit black people." Some middle-class blacks living on South Park Boulevard, adjacent to the site, also protested that they did not want low-income people living next to them. Despite opposition finally in 1938 the site for the Ida B. Wells Homes was acquired in the black community. Construction was completed in 1941. Before the project was designed, Mayor Kelly had tried to assuage the nearby hostile whites by unsuccessfully urging CHA to create a park belt along the eastern border as a kind of barrier.

The "Projects," as they were known, became a realizable dream to black people who sought mobility to lower-middle class respectability. Nineteen thousand (19,000) families applied for the 1,662 units. Those accepted had an average income of \$60 a month. The first manager of the project was Oscar C. Brown, a black lawyer and real estate broker, who was an outspoken protest leader. Although employing techniques that today would be considered somewhat paternalistic, he fostered community organiza-

tion and pride in "Wellstown." For one example, when the Cabrini Homes project was opened on the near North Side, the Wells tenants sent a truck load of flowers that they had raised in their own gardens to the opening ceremonies. The authors of *Black Metropolis* stated: "Its 2,000 families are the envy of the whole South Side." In spite of depression conditions only one-fourth of the early residents of Ida B. Wells were on relief, most were employed in blue-collar jobs, and 12 percent of the heads of families were even white-collar workers.

A push for public housing among blacks was also evidenced on the West Side where the threat of a lawsuit forced CHA to double its racial quota in the Jane Addams Homes. One white alderman who had a black enclave in his ward acted in favor of this sector of his constituency when he requested that CHA put up a "Negro project" in his ward. This request was not received unfavorably by the Authority.

The housing demands of the black community during the depression were for "wholesome living conditions, for breathing space." As it was set forth at the time: "The Negro community must and will expand its boundaries until it includes sufficient housing facilities to accommodate the colored population." While CHA adopted a conservative stance in not challenging the exclusion of blacks from white areas, it did provide that the black community receive a relatively large share of the total units in an era when public housing was much more desired by many groups. Of 5,400 units in projects commenced before the war blacks received over 40 percent of the total, although they constituted less than 10 percent of Chicago's population then.

Pressure for expansion of the black housing market was certainly not relieved by the conditions which the real estate interests had imposed upon the 1937 Housing Act. The requirement that for every unit constructed one slum unit had to be torn down meant that while there would be some upgrading of the quality of the black housing stock, its net size would not be increased from this source. The restrictions set by the fierce maintenance of the ghetto walls imposed themselves on even the physical form of the public housing. The limited amount of land available within the ghetto led Elizabeth Wood as early as 1938 to argue against the construction of row houses in black projects because a higher density of population was needed there. Actually the demolition of slums in the ghetto forced a special hardship on the black families displaced, just because of the limited amount of housing available to them. When the PWA public housing program was getting underway, the Metropolitan Housing Council of Chicago, an organization of blue ribbon types from business, the real estate industry and social welfare organizations, surveyed the problems of relocation. They found little difficulty in relocating the white families, but at first they could only find housing for one-fifth of the black families. The Metropolitan Housing Council's Rehousing Committee decided that relocation of the blacks should take place only within the existing ghetto and "that it was necessary to prevent widespread scattering of the Negroes by a constructive program within this area." The constructive program consisted of proposals for shoehorning more families into the already overcrowded South Side and a vague recommendation that there ought to be a reconsideration of some aspects of the proposed program for public housing for blacks.

The local political conditions under which the Chicago public housing program was developed in the early days was to a large extent a microcosm of the national political scene. CHA operated as a kind of symbol of New Deal social reform. Mayor Edward J. Kelly, as a skillful political

machine leader, was quite adept at wringing favors and advantage out of governmental structures. Yet, rather than garnering any patronage or other favoritism from CHA, he let the Agency stand forth as a showcase of his administration. The Mayor provided protection from aldermen who tried to levy tribute and from the City Council as a whole which was suspicious of much of CHA's power as an independent agency. The Housing Authority came to symbolize the reform aspects of the New Deal for Chicago. A civic minded, good government-type administration with high personal integrity was providing good housing for the deserving poor, both white and black. To the middle-class liberal this housing program displayed technical skill combined with integrity and benevolence. To the more immediately distressed sectors of the population it represented the possibility of a decent home at low cost.

One of the important conditions for CHA's program coming into being with an innovative style was the protection of a machine boss who reckoned the political potential of those groups to which this program so strongly appealed. The reformers on their own did not have the political resources to carry their program off on such an independent basis. A change in the political possibilities that entered into the Mayor's calculations would concomitantly bring about a shift in the pre-conditions for the operation of CHA. The relatively independent position of the Chicago public housers had been created by a national and local political upsurge. Since they had no secure political or social base of power, other than their control of the administrative machinery of CHA, a change in the political winds would severely restrict their authority.

New Deal Benefited Blacks

Given the general backward racial picture of the times and considering the competition that existed for public housing then, the black people of Chicago did rather well in this regard during the New Deal. Political realities underlay these gains, for blacks in the urban North became part of the New Deal upsurge. In the course of the 1930's black Chicagoans shifted their electoral alliances from the Republicans to the Democrats and strengthened their political organization at the ward level. Outside the ballot box, the mass followings developed by protest movements, both radical and middle-class, raised the possibility of much more drastic exercise of political muscle. Mayor Kelly gave recognition to these strengths in his distribution of patronage and in his commissioning people to important posts. Included among his appointments was that of Robert Taylor, one of the leading black champions of public housing, as a CHA commissioner in 1938. In 1943 Taylor was elevated to the chairmanship.

With the advent of World War II almost all governmental programs were reoriented within a framework of wartime priorities. Public housing was no exception. Emphasis was placed on providing shelter for employees of defense plants. Income limits were suspended for war workers so that they could reside in public housing even though they no longer qualified under the administrative definition of low-income. With increased incomes and an influx of people into the city, any housing was at a premium. Amendments to the Housing Act sought to relieve this shortage by removing the requirement of equivalent slum clearance. The federal government also assumed the full costs of project development. Under the provision of war-oriented legislation most of federal efforts for construction went into the building of special housing, often in temporary buildings, at sites located in close proximity to defense plants.

The black workers, who were now in heavy demand from the labor starved war industries, received a goodly

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proportion of the new units. Of the five wartime projects constructed by CHA, two were planned for all white occupancy and three were to be bi-racial. Cabrini Homes on the Near North Side which was designed for 20 percent black occupancy was the only one that remained bi-racial over any period of time. Even during the wartime housing shortage, not many white tenants remained in the Brooks Homes on the West Side that had been targeted for an 80 percent black occupancy. "Most whites refused to live in a project which was predominantly colored; those who tried it generally left as soon as they could, often with the encouragement of Negro families, who felt that the whites were occupying places that should rightfully have been given to Negroes."

Considerable pressure developed to construct temporary housing for the black war workers, evidently on the consideration that their sojourn in the city should only last for the duration of hostilities and then they would be returned to the South. The blue ribbon Metropolitan Housing Council pressed for the construction of temporary units on any vacant site available inside the ghetto. This position was tenaciously held despite the fact that between 1940 and 1944 the population of the already overcrowded ghetto had increased by 20 percent with virtually no growth in the space that it occupied. The federal government tried to get CHA to construct 1,500 temporary dwelling units for black workers, but the Authority under Robert Taylor's leadership insisted that the housing for the blacks working in defense industries should be permanent.

The insistence on permanent housing lead to a planning crisis as the site chosen for the war project, Altgeld Gardens, was located on an isolated, inaccessible site in the far southern reaches of the city. This location had been chosen on the assumption that since it was close to the steel mills and other heavy industry of the Calumet Region, war workers would have been anxious to reside nearby their jobs. The planners had not reckoned on the fact that the site was cut-off from most good transportation and removed from any other residential areas. Perhaps they thought this location would minimize white objections to some of the occupants being black. The site choice was a blunder, as few workers wanted to live there. Only 2 percent of the original applicants were Caucasian. In order to save itself from having a white elephant on its hands, CHA prevailed upon the very competent black manager of Ida B. Wells to take over the management of Altgeld. He conducted an extensive recruiting campaign. Although workers of both races were sought, only blacks, who found a more dire housing shortage than whites, signed up.

Consistency was not evident in the way the CHA leadership administered the handful of bi-racial projects. When racist opposition became strong, CHA safely hid behind the neighborhood composition rule. Where it was possible without any significant opposition, the Authority made efforts to avoid the kind of segregation that they had originally set-up at Jane Addams — a pattern that they later modified. For example, when a white family did not want to move into an entry with blacks at Addams, they were told to take the assigned apartment or leave it. At Ida B. Wells it was

proposed that whites would be willing to move in if only they were given their own exclusive building; this proposition was turned down. The access of blacks to the bi-racial projects was limited, for the administration defined the main problem at these locations to be that of retaining whites. Therefore, not only were there strict quotas, but the blacks were subjected to special screening and carefully selected "to create the general feeling that project Negro families are different from other Negro families." Extensive debates took place within the staff as how to distribute the black families at Cabrini on the near North Side so as to minimize the ruffling of the whites, both in the project and the surrounding community. But no one was concerned about the needs or feelings of the black families. Indeed, in periods of housing shortage, the quotas worked a hardship on blacks. During World War II while vacancies at Cabrini were kept open for whites, there were over 250 eligible blacks on the project's waiting list who were allowed to move in only if another black family moved out.

Wartime Influences

Economic necessities created by the wartime demand for the reserve army of black labor reinforced the political leverages generated during the New Deal days. There was a continuation of the atmosphere in which black families had relatively good access to public housing, even in the face of the wartime demand for these units by others. However, the housing shortage was much more severe for blacks, and, therefore, their need was much greater. Another benefit gained by blacks regarding the public housing program was the entree that they got to jobs in the construction industry. The federal government had ordered that in the construction of public housing blacks were to be employed in the same proportion as they were in the local population. We have evidence that pressure was applied in wartime to comply with this quota. In Chicago, construction firms were instructed to hire blacks as at least 3.5 percent of the skilled workers. Compliance reports were required, and they were audited by the National Housing Administration.

Even in the era when all the national aims were supposedly set on uniting the country and winning the war, private housing interests were sharpening their claws for a fight to make post-war conditions more favorable for them. If they could help it, they did not want to see concessions granted on the same order of magnitude as the 1937 Housing Act. Planning in the official city bodies proceeded on the basis of slum clearance. Their public documents gave little or no recognition to public housing.

The immediate post-war period witnessed two important developments that were significant in delineating the racial policies of CHA. Interestingly, they indicated contrary directions — in one case breaking down discriminatory barriers, in the other erecting new ones. In the case of giving returned black soldiers access to the temporary veterans projects in white neighborhoods, the Authority took a forthright non-discriminatory stand even though it met considerable, even sometimes violent, opposition. Behind the scenes, however, fundamental legislative conditions of operation were imposed that constrained CHA to proceed for decades to come in a manner that would place severe hardship on the black community. It is worthwhile to trace out these two developments.

In order to meet the desperate needs of the veterans, the Housing Authority, with City Council approval, entered into an agreement with the federal government to provide temporary housing for them. The federal authorities insisted that black veterans get a fair proportion of the housing but the question of racial segregation was left up to local option. Since the housing was needed immediately in

Chicago, it had to be built on vacant land which generally was only available in outlying white sections of the city. Under these circumstances if the neighborhood composition rule were left intact, blacks could not get their share of this housing. The CHA staff, therefore, decided to set forth a new policy and place blacks at sites in white areas. There were two conditions that somewhat lessened any risk for them: The Mayor had agreed to back up CHA in case of racial troubles, and the veterans housing was only temporary so that the blacks would move out in a couple of years.

The Authority proceeded along the new course with caution. It was decided to limit the number of possible trouble spots by admitting black families only in the larger projects. CHA planning projected that in white neighborhoods the smaller projects would be all white. The few larger projects in these areas would contain a small percentage of blacks on a carefully controlled basis both in terms of numbers and as to individual characteristics. For example, most of the blacks admitted in these homes were former officers. This policy appeared to get off to a good start in the first bi-racial project. However, the controlled placement of blacks led to a snag in filling the next one.

CHA Takes a Stand

Airport Homes was a 185-unit veterans development in the lily white southwest area of Chicago. CHA leased out two-thirds of the units to whites. The Authority had carefully selected some black families for this project, but they were not yet ready to move. In order to hold to their plans of social engineering, CHA stalled for time until the specially designated blacks could take occupancy by announcing that there was a delay while the builder was finishing details. At this point white veterans from the adjacent neighborhood without authorization occupied the remaining units to forestall move-ins by blacks. After some hesitancy CHA worked out a delicate strategy. Those squatters who were eligible for the units were given legal occupancy. Those not eligible were urged to leave. When this approach failed, the Authority succeeded by threatening court action. Two black families were among those placed in the new vacancies. However, mob action and violence forced them out after a couple of weeks. CHA countered by trying to get more blacks to move in, but none were willing under such dangerous circumstances. Although Airport Homes was to remain a solidly white project, CHA had taken what was considered in all quarters a strong anti-discriminatory stand.

Publicity over the incident made CHA's new racial

"One of the major objectives was to push the blacks off of certain highly valued plots."

policy an important issue. Black veterans made application for almost all the other projects, including some of the smaller ones that had been intended as all white. When thus challenged directly, the Authority followed a more extended non-discriminatory policy than they had intended. In some cases there was a favorable reception; for example, in one instance the white neighbors in the project took the initiative of appealing to the hostile local merchants to provide delivery services for the blacks. A very different scene unfolded on the far south side at the site of Fernwood Homes. The local civic association with the support of their alderman, Reginald DuBois, demanded that blacks be excluded. Elizabeth Wood at a public meeting in May, 1947 informed the local property owners that she did not know if any blacks would apply for Fernwood. However, if

they did, she stated, "We must invite them all in the exact order of their priority and on the basis of need."

The opposition and threats from the community gave CHA ample warning of future trouble. So forewarned they conducted, with the aid of the Mayor's Commission on Human Relations, a standard inter-group relations campaign with those neighborhood leaders who were accessible. Yet, when the first group of tenants moved in, a sixth of whom were black, a mob of 5,000 gathered. For the first two weeks a thousand police were assigned to check the mob and its acts of violence. Miss Wood stood her ground in spite of a conspicuous lack of support on the part of the new, blue-ribbon-sponsored Mayor, Martin Kennelly. After six months of disturbance and massive police presence, the affair subsided and the black families were relatively safely established at Fernwood.

In the course of these events the Chicago Housing Authority emerged as a symbol regarding race relations. As Meyerson and Banfield summarize:

Hitherto, the Authority's racial stand, while it was probably no more discriminatory than that of most other government agencies, had been conservative; certainly no one had ever seriously claimed that the Authority was trying to change race relations in any fundamental way. But now, after the events of Airport Homes and Fernwood, CHA was hailed by pro-Negro and damned by anti-Negro organizations for its "aggressive leadership" in the struggle to end racial discrimination. Alderman DuBois introduced a resolution in City Council in which he charged that CHA "persists in theories in housing which are shared by no other representative local government agencies in Chicago, and are not in accord of those of a great majority of citizens."

Ironically, CHA's racial position regarding the permanent program in the regular projects had not changed at all. In these instances the neighborhood composition rule still held sway. Even the Commissioners' statement of a non-discriminatory policy that was passed in 1947 was limited to veterans housing.

At the same time the events around Airport Homes and Fernwood thrust the Authority into the public eye as a crusading champion against segregation, certain actions were taking place in the state and city governments and in the councils of some powerful, prestigious institutions which would be much more important in determining the total racial impact of CHA. This latter set of actions were not labelled as being racial matters. Some of them were put forward as matters of broad public interest; others were deals made in private, obscured from public view. The long run significance of this set of developments rested in the fact that they were the acts which set the priorities and the framework within which institutional power, personal prestige and government subsidy were to be applied in the development and redevelopment of urban land. Blacks were affected because a large portion of the land under consideration was in the ghetto, and one of the major objectives was to push the blacks off of certain highly valued plots. The processes that took place in Chicago in this regard had national significance, for in a large sense this city can be considered the demonstration project that set the model for post-war urban renewal. Local and state initiatives took place before a federal program was established. Chicago had the most extensive redevelopment program going before the U.S. Congress passed the urban renewal sections of the 1949 Housing Act.

The Landed Interests Set Priorities

As soon as the New Deal public housing program got off the ground, many of the groups which had bitterly opposed the initial legislation perceived the possibility that some of

the development procedures used by the local authorities might well be adapted to serve their own ends. In 1939 leading real estate interests, architectural firms, building materials firms and construction trade union leaders banded together to form an organization called the Chicago Building Congress, whose objective was to put slum clearance under the control of private enterprise instead of the government. Their activity largely consisted of lobbying for enabling legislation from the Illinois General Assembly. They proposed to set up "public service building corporations" that would have powers of eminent domain in designated blighted areas so that they could hold down the land costs for private development. The leadership of the organization put forth the plan that in the slums near to downtown the development corporations would convert the land according to the terminology of the day to "higher usage." The bill that was proposed provided that there would be no limitation on the cost of building improvements, maximum rentals or dividends paid out. They figured that they could not profitably house the displaced low-income families on land in that close to the central business district because even blighted areas were expensive there as they had a large speculative value. These potential developers calculated that they could economically use these lands near to the central business district for high cost housing. Further, they figured that a private operation could profitably house poor people on outlying vacant land which was very low-cost.

Developers Get Law Passed

This coalition did not have difficulty in getting its way with the Illinois General Assembly. The 1941 legislative session passed a Neighborhood Redevelopment Act that embodied most of the proposals of the Building Congress. At the same time a Medical Center Commission was established to clear slums for the expansion of the University of Illinois Medical School and affiliated hospitals on the West Side. The Commission, made up half of appointees by the Governor and half by the Mayor, was granted powers of eminent domain and funds for land acquisition.

Private developers did not take immediate advantage of the legislation that they had had written for them. Litigation over the constitutionality of the Redevelopment Act and war-time shortages frustrated any use until 1945, but even after these matters no longer stood in the way, nothing was done under this authorization. Nevertheless, their concerns to leave themselves a free field of operations were being reflected even into the administration of public housing as pressures were placed on CHA to build only temporary housing for war workers, and a National Housing Administration official was advising the Authority to place its buildings at one site next to the railroad tracks so as to be a buffer against this non-residential use and leave the much preferable remainder of the tract for private development of middle-income housing.

In 1945 both state and city funds totaling over seven million dollars were authorized for land clearance, but with the exception of the work of the Medical Center Commission nothing concrete was done. However, general interest was increasing. In testifying before the Senate Banking Committee in regards to the unsuccessful Housing Act of 1945, Newton C. Farr, past president of both the Chicago and the National Real Estate Boards, pointed out the interest of the leading Chicago business interests in slum clearance under private auspices. Farr favored those sections of the bill which supported clearance and opposed those providing for more public housing. Redevelopment in his view was best done under private auspices. If government were to be involved, it should be local government. It is interesting to note that Farr himself was still one of the

most active champions of racially restrictive covenants in the entire city.

Extensive planning was taking place at the Chicago level for the use of the state and local funds for land clearance and rehousing. The Illinois State Housing Board, the Chicago City Council, the Chicago Housing Authority and the Chicago Plan Commission came to an agreement to limit redevelopment to a limited number of blighted clearance areas with the conditions that most of the lands should be used for housing and that private enterprise should have the first opportunity to develop the sites. The program was interpreted to mean "replacing low-rent, blighted housing now occupying some of the best situated land with economic-rent-bearing structures which will attract a new group of occupants." In spite of this enabling legislation nothing new in terms of extensive slum clearance was to get started in Chicago until, first, a joint private initiative was taken by Michael Reese Hospital and the

"A cloak of legitimacy could be obtained by hospitals and universities for the displacement of black families . . . just because these institutions had widely recognized social objectives."

Illinois Institute of Technology in replanning a large portion of the South Side ghetto in which they were situated and, secondly, the Illinois Blighted Areas Act was greatly strengthened by the General Assembly in 1947.

In addition to the economic and legal arrangements, extensive land clearance of blighted areas required mechanisms to make the projects socially and politically feasible. The relocation of the families residing in the blighted areas was one of the major obstacles that stood in the way of such feasibility. From experiences going back to the depression era when vacancy rates generally were high, it was well known that the black families who were removed from a clearance site experienced great difficulty in locating new housing. Therefore, conditions seemed to dictate that any extensive removal of families from black neighborhoods would have to be done by institutions that could claim large-scale civic purposes and that certain provisions would have to be made for the rehousing of the displaced families. Provision of relocation housing would head off organized black resistance, and the claims of broad civic needs would win over liberal reform types who might side with the displaced blacks. A cloak of legitimacy could be obtained by hospitals and universities for the displacement of black families from scarce housing just because these institutions had widely recognized social objectives. Private-regarding and profit-oriented operations could not make such claims and were hampered in overcoming the social and political inertia.

Miss Wood, representing both her own and the key CHA staffers thinking, recognized that the post-war future of public housing was strongly dependent upon clearance in blighted areas. In a speech before a national audience, she asserted that matters affecting the character of the housing for poor people should take precedence over such considerations as "restoring purchasing power to central business districts," "restoring municipal income," or "giving private enterprise new areas in which to operate its business." She wanted the planners to recognize "that the process of tearing down the slums is the process of pulling the roofs from over the heads of thousands of families." The most serious consideration should go to the re-housing of these displaced families. She urged the development of planned permanent communities on vacant lands, if it were neces-

sary on the outskirts of town. The CHA staff recommended the development of projects that were large enough to create a community and to radiate a positive influence into the surrounding areas. They were proposing the "Garden City" for poor people, complete with the super-blocks and by-passing traffic that were advocated by the planners of this school. (As a side point, when the Authority developed a tenant and community relations program during this period, Miss Wood's greatest interest in it revolved around the annual garden contest.)

Visions of re-creating the organic solidarity of the 19th century American small town have had a pervasive influence in political and social affairs of this century. Conservatives and progressives have both been under the influence of these visions, but they have applied them to different programmatic ends. Middle-class housing reformers have shared in this underlying analogy, even if they have translated it to an urban locale. Elizabeth Wood and her staff had one foot in this tradition. In recommending the large housing project, they precluded scattering small developments that could be absorbed into the existing urban social network. Instead, they desired a garden city type focal point that would radiate a different kind of influence out into that network. The CHA planners failed to take into account the realities of stigmatization according to race and class that take place in modern metropolitan America. Concentration of a large number of stigmatized persons into a neighborhood with no pre-existing institutional life would create a population uniquely subject to manipulation and sub-ordination. Only in an era of political upsurge from below when there would be a restructuring of a whole maze of institutions could this stigmatization be overcome. Even if the leading CHA officials wished for such a development, it was far beyond their powers. Therefore, when, with all the hesitations that Miss Wood expressed, they accepted an organic link into the type of business and prestige oriented urban redevelopment that was taking place, they accepted the frustration of their dream.

Meantime the main concern of blacks was for living space. By 1945 the black population of Chicago had expanded by 50 percent, that is over 100,000 more persons than lived there in 1930. Yet, there had only been minor additions to the areas available to them for housing. The effect of slum clearance projects was to reduce the already scarce stock of dwellings in the black sector of the housing market, thereby helping to drive the cost of housing up and developing pressure which led to the creation of new slum areas as the ghetto expanded. Even if public housing would build enough units to replace those torn down in slum demolition, the intensity of the housing shortage for blacks would remain as great, only there would be a smaller proportion of nonstandard units. A chain of interdependence had developed. The plans of the prestigious institutions for expansion and restructuring their neighborhoods on a non-ghetto basis were predicated on moving poor black families off what they considered their turf. Therefore, planners saw the promotion of more public housing for the black families they wanted to displace as a necessary component of their redevelopment schemes.

In May 1948, the major professional societies in the fields of planning and housing met in Chicago to consider the questions involved in rebuilding the city. A report on the conference pointed out: "The urban-redevelopment concept was adopted to make easier the investment of private funds into urban improvement projects, and help bolster the sagging land values and the economic decline of central city areas." The conferees came to the conclusion that in order to carry out renewal projects the people dislodged by the clearance would have to be rehoused largely in public housing built on vacant land, at least until

the housing inventories were greatly augmented.

"Negro relocation" was now considered as an essential cog in the overall redevelopment machinery. As one federal housing official explained the process, large-scale urban renewal required a series of actions in which "order, timing, and unabated progress" were imperative. Relocation was a necessary part of this series. "If the relocation lags, the progress, perhaps even the feasibility, of parts or the whole of the redevelopment program is jeopardized." He went on to add:

The approaching likelihood of major urban redevelopment efforts raises more sharply than ever the whole question of public attitudes towards the reshuffling of land use and property interests on such grand scale. By May of 1948, for example, a distinguished group of public officials, as they discussed the entire subject of rebuilding our cities, agreed that "the earlier proposals for urban redevelopment had been hopelessly deficient in that they gave little if any attention to public opinion or acceptance *even within the areas in which the operations were to be carried out.*" Certainly redevelopment does become a rather hopeless ideal if public acceptance is not sought, and substantially won, particularly in the redevelopment area itself. Obviously too, the residents of the clearance area subject the redevelopment proposal to the closest scrutiny when they find themselves face to face with the necessity of dislocation. At this crucial stage Negro acceptance of the necessity of the relocation sought is apt to prove a knotty proposition.

Negroes of course have no desire to remain in the slums. Nevertheless the friendly attitude of the Negro community towards public housing, which rendered relocation hardships endurable, does not appear in response to urban redevelopment proposals. Negroes readily appreciate the more severe impact of urban redevelopment relocation. They understand that more projects and hence greater volumes of displacement are involved. They know too that redevelopment projects are not always housing projects, at least not open to them. They are keenly aware that private redevelopment housing may bar them on the basis of rents, race or both. In sum, Negroes realize that huge areas are earmarked for clearance, threatening partial or total loss of their already too little living space. And they suspect that, in the absence of public policy and controls to prevent it, the real masters of urban redevelopment will be the forces intent upon recapturing Negro living space for the "right" people, while at the same time ruling Negroes the "wrong" people to live elsewhere in the city. There is, after all, considerable realism in the fact that Negroes, having been compelled to "take" space from the larger community, easily believe that the larger community will take it back at first opportunity.

That slum clearance will result in "Negro clearance" already is a strong and growing Negro feeling in the larger cities. Thus, in San Francisco Negroes made voluminous protest against a recent urban redevelopment proposal; in St. Louis, last year, they were a major factor in the defeat of an urban redevelopment bond issue; and in Chicago they are already in the courts, determined to block a redevelopment program already in existence.

The planners recognized that resistance on the part of black families who were scheduled for relocation could seriously disrupt their plans if there were not adequate dwellings to which they could move. "This is being demonstrated in Chicago where, although public funds are available for redevelopment and for relocation housing of displaced families, racial problems are looming as a major obstacle to their use." A top city of Chicago planning official in commenting on the conclusions of the Chicago conference of planners noted "our Chicago redevelopment program is based upon the assumption that 'without public

"Demolition, first of all, met the need of central business districts, educational and medical institutions that did not like to have the slums surrounding them."

housing, urban redevelopment cannot proceed." He went on to complain that there was considerable delay in a number of projects precisely because of problems in relocating families. In Chicago and elsewhere black families objected to being moved out of their homes, even if they were dilapidated, when the alternative was that a new home was difficult to find, had a high probability of also being run-down, and almost surely would cost more. Under these conditions it was difficult for them to perceive that slum clearance was of benefit to them. The resistance of black families to being removed from clearance sites, even when the land was to be used for public housing, was intense and necessitated the establishment of public relocation agencies and elaborate public relations operations.

Ironically, blacks were not the only group wary of the massive urban redevelopment plans that were being projected. Some of the more conservative economic groups had their reservations. The planners at the Chicago conference pointed out that a certain contradiction existed in that the business interests which stood to gain the most from these programs were somewhat leary of public guidance and controls. "They are especially wary of public housing, though it had been shown repeatedly that, without it, urban redevelopment cannot proceed. This 'state of mind' obstacle probably will diminish with time — and the successful and profitable construction of some pilot redevelopment projects . . ." Such a pilot plan was to be developed in Chicago under the leadership of Michael Reese Hospital.

The Chicago Housing Authority became directly involved in the clearance phases of redevelopment in a co-operative arrangement with Michael Reese Hospital — a major medical service and research complex operated by the Jewish community, whose location was in the midst of a very dilapidated slum section of the black community. At the end of World War II the hospital's board of directors had come to the conclusion that the surrounding environment was detrimental to the operation of their facilities. Serious consideration was given to moving the whole institution, but their existing plant represented such a large investment that replacement costs would have been prohibitive. Therefore, the decision was made to stay in the same location and change the neighborhood. As the hospital's major real estate agent stated: "They decided the economical procedure would be to stay and use all their resources, financial and political, to improve the areas in which they were located." As a private institution Michael Reese faced great difficulty in assembling a large tract of land that was held in many different parcels. The hospital got CHA to acquire the land under its power of eminent domain for the purpose of slum clearance. CHA had the right to turn over cleared land to other usage than public housing, provided it constructed an equivalent number of units elsewhere. The long delayed Dearborn Homes, which was finally being built in the South Side ghetto with state funds from the Blighted Areas Act, counted as the redevelopment housing to make the clearance possible.

The efforts of Michael Reese were reinforced by those of the Illinois Institute of Technology located about a mile

and a half away. IIT supplied more engineers per year than any other higher educational institution for Chicago industry. The school which was in the process of developing a one-hundred-acre campus, construed its problems in a way similar to the hospital. It needed land for expansion, and the surrounding black slum was considered a detrimental milieu. The two institutions banded together to form the South Side Planning Board which was to make comprehensive plans for a seven-square-mile area that was in their vicinity. The goal was to plan a non-ghetto predominantly white neighborhood which would be congenial to the maintenance and growth of these institutions. In other words some prestigious white dominated institutions had developed a material interest in at least the partial dispersion of the black community. They could not achieve their goal of displacing a large section of the core of the ghetto if its outer limits remained stable or only slowly expanded. This type of concern in Chicago and other major cities was one of the important material bases upon which pro-integration sentiment in liberal and technocratic circles developed in the North.

Those who directed the Michael Reese and South Side Planning Board efforts were very sensitive to the potential black opposition to a reduction in their housing supply. These officials went out of their way to make some concessions to the black community and to claim that they were not engaged in "Negro clearance." The hospital took this occasion to open up its staff to some black physicians and to extend its services to black patients. The agreement with CHA provided for special efforts in relocation. The South Side Planning Board included among its directors many prominent black men ranging from conservative to liberal, and the organization undertook an extensive community relations program. After land for expansion was provided for the two institutions, the second phase involved the clearance by the city of a large tract of land with 3,560 dwelling units for redevelopment into the Lake Meadows middle-income housing project for 1,660 families by the New York Life Insurance Company. Care was taken to see that the three Chicago based black insurance companies were included for the development of a small portion of the tract, but their participation fell through at the last moment. The original plans were that Lake Meadows would have a clear white majority among its tenants. However, some miscalculations about market conditions frustrated this goal. A subsequent middle-income project in the same area developed by the same real estate firm that had been the agent for New York Life had succeeded in maintaining a 20 percent quota for blacks.

The primary purposes and priorities for the clearance of blighted areas in the post-war era were not established for the purposes of providing low-income families with a "decent, safe and sanitary home" as the housers articulated. Demolition first of all met the need of central business districts, educational, and medical institutions that did not like to have the slums surrounding them. The construction of expressways to connect the burgeoning suburbs with the central city was later added to this list. Those corporate interests with metropolitan-wide, regional, or national focus were very concerned with pressing this type of redevelopment. The universities and medical centers trained their personnel, provided service, and loomed as civic monuments. Preservation of the downtown not only protected great vested interests but also assured the future of their base of operations. In their eyes, broad civic functions that exceeded the economic interests of any particular group of developers were at stake. Therefore, the Chicago Association of Commerce and Industry was proud of a record going back to the 1930's of initiative in promoting slum clearance and claimed a key role in the promotion of

the land clearance and rehousing program adopted by Chicago in 1947. Even the Chicago based leaders of the real estate and mortgage industries who were major opponents of public housing, strongly supported slum clearance and favored federal legislation in the latter area provided it was vested under local control. However, many of the smaller real estate and building interests were concerned only with their own neighborhood of operation. Their attitudes tended to be hostile to any government actions that might disturb their usual manner of doing business. Therefore, trade organizations like the Chicago Real Estate Board, in which the large civic oriented real estate operators were associated with neighborhood based brokers, did not take a stand or were opposed to proposals for public housing, even when it was for relocation purposes in conjunction with other metropolitan oriented interests like those in the Association of Commerce and Industry or the Metropolitan Housing and Planning Council.

The Mayor's Housing Action Committee, operating under the chairmanship of Holman D. Pettibone, president of Chicago Title and Trust Company, was basically responsible for the 1947 Blighted Areas Program. Pettibone also acted as the liaison man between the Mayor, the City Council, and the General Assembly. In this work, Pettibone concurred in the prevailing sentiment of the legislature that clearance should be under the control of an entirely separate authority, the Chicago Land Clearance Commission, rather than the one that handled public housing. They wanted it to be clear that the monies would be spent for slum removal and not for public housing. He also was explicit in stating his primary objective to be that of creating conditions under which private capital would feel confident in investing in redevelopment.

The differentiation in the stand of the more parochially oriented Chicago Real Estate Board and the civic-oriented businessmen with metropolitan-wide interests was brought to the surface at the time of the most important local battle over public housing. The Real Estate Board was somewhat divided internally as to the stand it should take; however, its Civic Affairs Committee communicated to the City Council that it was sceptical of the need for any large-scale increase in public housing. The Metropolitan Housing and Planning Council, describing itself as an organization including "business and professional men and women, realtors, bankers, builders, educators, labor leaders, and other public-spirited citizens" which could prove its private enterprise bias, released to the press a reasoned attack on the Real Estate Board's stand. The Housing Council's position was that private enterprise should supply all the decent housing on which it could make a profit, but there were some low income groups who could not pay a profitable rent even for the cheapest dwellings in this category. "Believing that elimination of slums is essential, public housing must be supplied for those slum dwellers who cannot pay an economic rent."

Among the metropolitan oriented business leadership public housing clearly was not an independent goal. They accepted some new housing for low income families because this was instrumental to their redevelopment objectives. The relative importance of these goals was reflected in the sums of money available for these purposes in 1948 by the 1947 state aided program - \$26,000,000 for clearance and demolition, \$18,000,000 for the construction of new public housing. Further the works of the Chicago Plan Commission, which was dominated by leadership from the larger business interests, clearly indicated that their preference was to supply the housing needs for the poorer stratum by a "filtering down" process whereby new homes would be privately built for those who could pay for them on a profitable basis. The houses vacated by the new home

buyers would filter down to lower income families.

The preferred "filter down" theory gave no recognition to the facts of racial segregation and dual housing markets. The filtering down process simply assumed a transfer of dwelling units from one group to another by marginal adjustments in price. But blacks did not buy or lease in the same markets as whites did. The transfer of housing from one racial market to another involved the hurdling of major institutional barriers: political, economic, and social. It was a conflict-laden procedure that often disrupted the smooth operation of institutions and systems. Knowledge of this potential disruption had been important in the thinking of planners and liberals when they urged more public housing and integration to the redevelopers.

The Battle Over Sites

The reform forces had joined hands with the metropolitan oriented financial interests in the work of the Mayor's Housing Action Committee to push through the combined program of slum clearance and public housing that was embodied in the Illinois Blighted Areas Act of 1947. (In a number of the Eastern industrial states, such as New York and Pennsylvania, similar type legislative packages were adopted.) Since the political thrust of the New Deal had dissipated and the consensus of the cold war was firmly established, it was no longer possible to act in an atmosphere wherein established powers felt the need to make concessions in order to head off potential crises. Special legislation made for the returning veterans was the last batch of concessions conceived within such a framework until the civil rights movement was to gain sufficient strength in the 1960's. This background helps explain why the public housers shifted their orientation to operating within a redevelopment program in which tearing down of the houses of the poor was to take a much higher priority than the construction of decent new dwellings for them. Such a new alliance was the only set of conditions under which the group of housing reformers and bureaucrats, who did not have much in the way of their own constituency, could maintain enough leverage to keep their program going on a large-scale. The housers did not foresee that restrictions and priorities set by this alliance were to force the liberals out of CHA or else compel them to abandon their reform objectives when it came to the treatment of black people.

Tensions inherent in the future development of public housing in Chicago came to the surface in confrontations over the site location of new projects that were to house the families relocated from land clearance areas. The logic of urban renewal demanded that the relocatees be settled away from the vicinity of the prestigious institutions in whose neighborhoods the demolition was taking place. Since the overwhelming number of the displaced families were going to be black, from the beginning racial calculations loomed large in the battle.

One of the restrictions placed on the CHA in the package of state legislation for land clearance and relocation housing was that the City Council would have to approve the sites that were financed with these funds. Site approval by the Alderman brought another whole new dimension to the planning of public housing, for it gave middle-class and working-class ethnic communities a veto over the location of public housing in their midst. Since the dominant groups in these communities had experienced several years of full employment, they no longer had the intense direct interest in public housing that they had had during the New Deal. The more prestigious white communities were already insulated from having public housing placed in their areas because of the market conditions of high land costs. For racist and status reasons a wide range of white communities

were now able to exclude low-income public housing — the well-off through the indirect mechanisms of the housing market, the not so well-off by the direct veto of the aldermen. Further those real estate and financial interests, who during the building doldrums of the depression had considered the possibility of building low-income housing on outlying vacant lands, were no longer giving any serious thought to such ventures as they were deeply involved in the post-war boom of building middle income homes in these areas. Public housing was being ground between the millstones of a growing demand due to urban renewal displacement and restrictions as to where it could be built. These restrictions which previously had existed to a certain extent informally were now firmed up by the site approval powers granted to the City Council.

The dynamics of the situation can be schematized as follows: Whatever equilibrium that existed in the racial controls of the Chicago housing markets was being disturbed *first* by the general increase in the black population and its demand for better accommodations, and *second* by the push of prestigious institutions to dislodge poor blacks from their surrounding areas. Under the new redevelopment and housing program, this second process had a very pointed impact, because public housing had been shoved into the role of being a safety-valve for urban renewal with the relocatees being placed in a priority position on its applications list. Forces that operated to maintain the old equilibrium were, *first*, the practices and ethos of the real estate industry which had played a key role in institutionalizing housing segregation in Chicago, and, *second*, the more dispersed forms of racial prejudice that existed in all the white communities and resulted in the exclusion of blacks. Under these conditions the larger metropolitan-regarding real estate and financial interests were pursuing a somewhat contradictory set of objectives. At the same time they wanted to remove the poor blacks from the neighborhood of key business districts and prestigious institutions; they subscribed to the racial policies of the real estate industry; they wanted to preserve from public usage any vacant lands in which they foresaw a profit potential; and, finally, they had to pursue these policies with the aid, and often through the agency, of a political process in which the white ethnic groups played a key role. Obviously, something was going to have to give way under these conflicting pressures.

Once the essential consensus for urban redevelopment had been consummated in the Illinois Blighted Areas Act of 1947, matters rolled along rapidly. In the fall of that year a large bond issue was placed before the Chicago voters to implement this program. The public relations of the bond question were excellent and it carried by a large majority. Black voters especially had the impression that they were going to get greatly improved housing out of redevelopment and gave the bonds the most decisive majority of any sector of the population. CHA now had the wherewithal to proceed on an extensive post-war program of building relocation housing with state and city funds. The board and staff of the Authority went ahead with their idea of constructing large projects that would have an influence over an entire neighborhood. The location of these projects were to be placed on good vacant sites, mostly on outlying land.

Mayor Kennelly and the key leaders of the Chicago City Council, a group that was known as the "Big Boys," did not find these sites acceptable. From an economic angle they wanted to preserve for private development vacant sites on which a profit could be made. From a racial angle they sought to maintain the lily-whiteness of their wards. A period of over half a year was taken up in negotiating a compromise package of nine relatively small housing sites. Two-thirds of them were on slum sites situated next to railroads and factories, and less than half were on complete-

"From an economic angle they wanted to preserve for private development vacant sites on which a profit could be made."

ly vacant land. Five of these relocation sites were in white neighborhoods. The aldermen for these wards assented to project locations only on the basis of an understanding with the Chairman of CHA that there would be a 10 percent quota on blacks in the white areas. After this agreement the City Council overwhelmingly approved the compromise group of sites. CHA leadership had previously come to the conclusion that 30 percent black was the maximum at which they could retain whites in a bi-racial project. Therefore the chairman did not feel that he had had to retreat too far in this deal.

Site Limitations, Racial Veto Add to Housing Woes

All of the jockeying for position took place behind the scene, an atmosphere in which compromise could be struck more easily than if the differences had been public. In the private horse trading CHA had a weak position. To little avail, Chairman Taylor had argued that the slum clearance objectives of the city's housing program were imperiled because "a private program for rebuilding the slums could not proceed unless there were low rent houses into which displaced low-income families could move." He tried to make the case that existing plans called for the demolition of 10,600 dwelling units for highways and clearance surrounding medical and education institutions. The construction of public housing on occupied slum sites would add to this dislocation rather than relieve it. Despite the excellent logic of its position CHA came to find out that its sweeping plans for new public housing were not very firmly hitched to the wagon of urban renewal. The City Council for its part came to value the right of site approval that they had over state aided housing. In anticipation of the pending passage of a large-scale federal housing program, the Council prevailed upon the legislature to grant them approval rights over all public housing sites. This power was clearly a racial veto as the CHA chairman recognized when he reported to his fellow commissioners that a principal objection to their initially proposed sites "was that Negroes would be moved into white areas of the city." As one of the officials of the Chicago Real Estate Board informed a CHA staff member, the racial stand of the Authority created difficulties in that camp, too. The public posture of the CREB, opposing public housing on outlying sites and accepting it only on vacant lands, covered up a three-way split between those who opposed all public housing, those who support the public position, and those agreeing with CHA.

The CHA leadership and many of the proponents of public housing came to the conclusion that they would have to make a public battle when they next presented a package of sites to be built with funds from the new 1949 U.S. Housing Act. The commissioners and staff carefully worked out a grouping of sites that they thought would both meet their basic planning goals and be politically feasible. Half the 10,000 proposed units were to be built on vacant land, the other half on slum sites, several were in

outlying white areas. Shortly after the Authority presented these sites publicly to the City Council, the reception was distinctively hostile. Supporters of public housing recognized that they would have to mount a strong campaign. The leadership of the pro-housing support organizations were overwhelmingly middle-class whites with a New Deal outlook, and their strategy reflected this background. They tried to convince the Democratic Party leadership of the political wisdom of supporting what they considered to be a popular issue. When self-regarding arguments proved inadequate, the housing supporters threatened mass political actions in the wards for which the housing was proposed. But the depression borne political push from below had been spent, and nobody but the threateners took these warnings very seriously.

Chicago Aldermen Laugh

The City Council proceeded to make a comic opera out of the whole affair. In spite of considerable newspaper publicity, the Aldermen failed to consider their opposition as formidable. Becoming their own planners, the Council's Housing sub-committee hired a bus to tour a hodge-podge of over forty sites on which they had received tips through various channels. After a tour filled with horseplay, the sub-committee proceeded to recommend a list of absurd sites. These high jinks brought down the censure of one of the Aldermanic leaders, and he succeeded in bringing a certain amount of decorum to the proceedings. The Big Boys in the City Council, along with the Mayor, now intervened to propose a compromise set of locations that were neither especially palatable to the CHA, on one side, or the majority of the Aldermen, on the other. Basically it provided for an extensive building program, but the bulk of the building was confined to slum sites in the ghetto. The majority in the Council might well have settled for no construction at all. CHA wanted vacant sites so that they would not add to the number of relocatees. They also wanted locations outside the ghetto so that they could break down racial segregation.

"... the public housers went down to defeat and could not get support from Washington."

Ironically, the compromise package provided little relief in meeting the relocation needs for which it was designed. Of the 9,000 units approved in 1950 only 2,000 were on vacant land. Clearance for public housing in itself was creating the need to relocate about 7,000 households. Since most of the sites were in the ghetto, additional black families were forced to move. Nevertheless, the Mayor and the Council leaders felt that Chicago had to have some kind of public housing program. Many of the larger metropolitan oriented economic interests who had backed CHA felt that the issue should not be pressed anymore. Marshall Field's paper, the *Sun-Times*, which had been the publicity mainstay of the public housers, came to favor the compromise. Ferd Kramer, President of the Metropolitan Housing Council, recommended to the commissioners that even though he thought the City Hall plan to be an unworkable one which would cause the Slum Clearance Program to mark time, they ought to accept the plan to get something underway. The limits of what was acceptable for CHA had become defined by what was racially acceptable to the white aldermen and their constituents. The large interests were not willing to continue a battle on this question.

The public housing camp itself was still not daunted, but it proved to be about as weak as the aldermen had assumed.

With the exception of one mass noontime rally organized in the stockyards by the United Packinghouse Workers (a union with radical leadership and a largely black membership), they were not able to demonstrate any support in terms of large numbers. When they turned to their fellow housers who were staffing the U.S. Housing and Home Finance Agency, despite some initial encouragement they found to their disappointment that the Washington bureaucrats were anxious to find technical grounds for avoiding a confrontation with the Chicago City administration. The Federal officials took the position that while they agreed with the housers in principle, they hoped to arrive at these goals by a process of gradualism. But at this point political considerations indicated that a compromise should be supported in Chicago.

The appeal of the CHA leadership to Washington for intervention had a larger significance than just that of the local scene. It was a testing of the entire housing policy and domestic reform posture of the Truman administration. The major national New Deal-oriented leaders of the public housing movement involved themselves in the unsuccessful attempts to influence the Housing and Home Finance Agency. Their spokesman asserted that: "Approval of Chicago's present program would, in our judgment, not only have a sharply adverse effect on the development and redevelopment of the City of Chicago, but would establish a pattern which would be harmful to the purposes of the national housing program throughout the country." When the public housers in Chicago went down to defeat and could not get support from Washington, in a very real sense the depression-created national housing reform movement went down with it. They never again were to be an effective independent force.

Business Turns on Public Housing

The real estate and mortgage industry leaders who had originally supported public housing as a part of their land clearance program had come to the conclusion that government supported low income housing was a moribund issue. However, they had no intention of giving up their plans for redevelopment; only now they were willing to accept the racial vetoes of the white communities regarding public housing. Therefore, the relocation of the displaced black families would have to take a less systematic form of haphazard, often conflict-laden, expansion of the ghetto into surrounding white neighborhoods. James C. Downs, Jr., head of two large real estate firms and the Mayor's Housing and Redevelopment Coordinator, pronounced, "[Public] Housing is the deadeast politically that it has been in the last fifteen years. Major interest is in redevelopment and, accordingly, our program should be directed towards that interest." George Dovenmuehle, president of one of the largest mortgage firms in the nation and chairman of the Chicago Dwellings Association, an auxiliary of CHA, in objecting to a proposal for the consolidation of renewal activities and public housing in one municipal agency, made the point even more sharply:

The most controversial portion of the entire program lies in the realm of public housing. Many of the agencies now enjoy the confidence of the public. I fear that if public housing became a part of this organization some of this confidence would be lost. Some of the activities which now have the "green light" might be held up if any part of public housing were in any way involved, and many would fear that public housing might dominate the policies of the organization. *I am sure that I would keep public housing in a separate agency, completely subservient to the other activities.* (Italics added.)

Even the ever present Ferd Kramer wrote in this vein when he urged the Federal officials to approve the compromise package of sites "in view of the steadily deteriorating prestige of the Authority in the community and in the City Council."

Perhaps this new framework of operation was best summarized in the 1954 Report of the Mayor of the Citizens Committee to Fight Slums, a blue-ribbon, business-dominated group that was a kind of successor to the Mayor's Housing Action Committee. Since a variety of labor, community and welfare organizations are represented on committees of this nature, the language of such a report generally hedges and offers something to everyone. While this report was no exception, its definition of the situation was still unmistakable. The Committee was obviously impatient with the pace of clearance of blight surrounding the central city. Recognizing that most of the land it wanted cleared was occupied by low-income blacks, it urged in a general way that housing be built on vacant land by private and public developers without spelling out any mechanisms for accomplishing that objective. The specific recommendations for black people are of the greatest interest and deserve extensive reproduction:

The Mayor's Housing Coordinator has often and correctly stated that the overcrowded Negro areas of Chicago must be "de-densified" both inside and outside the city. This calls for unrestricted access to land, both vacant and improved, in accordance with the functioning of a free housing market. This will necessitate the general acceptance of the open occupancy idea, which in turn must rest on widespread educational campaigns supported by an official city and suburban policy of removing rather than fostering discriminatory barriers. Local organizations working close to the people, and guided by enlightened new local leadership, must assume a large portion of this task. But certain steps can and should be taken on a city-wide level. The Committee recommends:

"That the Mayor call together leaders of industry, labor and various civic groups, to formulate a means of enlisting city-wide cooperation in making land available for the housing needs of the non-white population. To the extent that the problem is a moral issue, the cooperation of the Archdiocese, the Rabbinical Association, the Church Federation of Chicago and other religious groups should be sought.

The Welfare Council of Metropolitan Chicago should designate agencies to undertake or expand programs of urbanization of recent migrants from the southern states, Mexico, and Puerto Rico."

The problem of overcrowding is continuously aggravated by the flow of new workers and their families to the city, for the great majority of whom no adequate living facilities presently exist. Some proper and intelligent action must be taken to regulate the flow until our housing supply is greatly augmented.

As practical interim measures the Committee made detailed, recommendations that would basically further place the burden of the housing shortage on the backs of the black families. They recommended that the Real Estate Board adopt a standard lease that provided for automatic termination in the case of overcrowding, the Department of Buildings should start a campaign to evict tenants of overcrowded units, and "responsible leaders in the Negro community must initiate a concerted effort to discourage the continued inflow of people whose presence can only compound the present difficulties."

No feasible plans for either increasing the supply of housing available to black families or achieving open occupancy were put forth. Piously these were indicated as moral issues. However, in the interim before such moral regeneration took place, the authors of the report had been able to

be quite specific about mechanisms to regulate the overcrowded black population. Interestingly, the sections of the report that dealt with public housing were most scanty and prefatory with no clear cut recommendations. Evidently the Committee also thought public housing was not very much alive.

After the defeat, the Housing Authority retreated to a defensive posture. Mr. Taylor resigned from the Commission. Miss Wood's hands were increasingly tied. Unshaken in her convictions, she reviewed the situation with despondency before a public audience. She spoke of a national climate in which "the air has been full of the cries and the despairs of public servants who have left the public service and gone elsewhere, defeated, disillusioned, intimidated, heartbroken, that they had failed in the cause to which they were dedicated." The public housing program in Chicago, in her view, had become shipwrecked on the shoals of race:

But now, the fact is, we are moving forward steadily. Because it was so understood by the City Council when it approved sites, the projects we have opened have been biracial, but the rumor had gone out that this is as far as the City will go - and no farther.

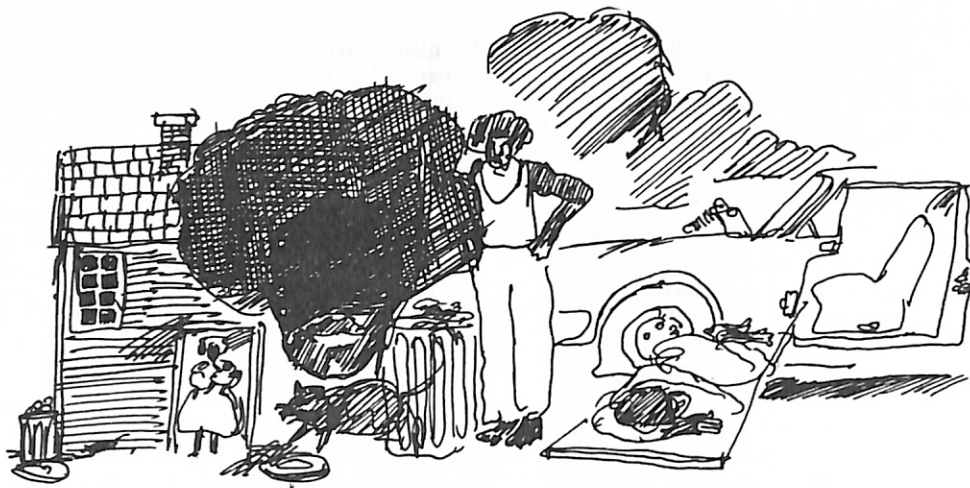
So you can see in the City of Chicago three facts: (1) a determination to sustain a policy of containment by all official acts that blazes out whenever a committee meets on housing; (2) a great overflow of Negroes, unofficially, out of their ghettos into all parts of the City - unofficially, by their own efforts, for you cannot indefinitely squeeze people any more than you can water; (3) but because this overflow is, as it were, against the official will, it takes place with all the aspects of desperation and illegality, and new slums are created daily. And the exploiters of human life are having a field day. And the next generation will have to cure the slums created by this generation's official blindness.

Growth of the public sector of housing was grinding to a halt. "Two years and two months have passed since the last official act was taken to secure more houses, to tear down more slums. A captive Authority has taken some steps but they have been futile." Miss Wood even saw the attack expanding beyond the immediate issues when she stated "that those pressures which have brought about the end of militancy for expanding the good works of public service are not content with that, but they must destroy even good administration."

Tightening the Chains

Although the expansion of public housing was severely impeded, there was no abatement in the displacement of black families - in fact the tempo increased. Between 1948 and 1965 by official statistics, which notoriously undercounted the removal of blacks, over 33,000 black occupied dwelling units were demolished for urban renewal, expressways and related purposes. These units accounted for more than one-fourth the housing stock within the black community at the time of the 1950 census. During the period in which these units were being torn down, there also was an increase of black migration into the city as Chicago industry was recruiting workers to meet labor shortages induced by the Korean War.

The effect of this housing deficit on the black families dispossessed of their homes for redevelopment purposes was disastrous. The most careful provisions made for any clearance area were those that were carried out for Michael Reese Hospital by the Chicago Housing Authority. Yet, it resulted in tremendous hardship. A study of the Reese relocation shows that the displaced families had to pay greatly increased rents. Forty-six percent of all the relo-



cated families had to pay at least sixteen dollars or more per month than they had in their previous home. Whereas only six percent of the families originally were paying over fifty dollars per month rent, after the move thirty-eight percent were in this category. Families who moved into public housing had a smaller rent increase. When we examine the changes in the quality of the housing, we find that those who moved to public housing did improve the size and condition of their dwellings. The most generous judgment that can be made regarding those who moved to privately owned housing was that their new housing was of the same poor quality as that from which they moved — *in spite of the fact that they were paying considerably more for it.*

Three studies of relocation made by official bodies later in the 1950's indicated somewhat greater improvement in the quality of housing (a finding that some observers claim is colored by bias in methodology). These studies uniformly showed tremendous rent increases. Two of the reports revealed that in the average case there was a doubling of the rent. One study showed that before moving the typical family was paying 16.6 percent of its income in rent. After relocation this ratio shot up to 26.6 percent of income. These later studies did not single out differential characteristics for those moving into public housing, but on the basis of the Michael Reese study we can conclude that limitations in the construction of public housing added to the penalties imposed on the displaced black families.

Demand placed on the CHA facilities reflected the dire straights of black families seeking housing. In the early 1950's, 65 to 75 percent of the black families admitted to tenancy got in because they had priority as relocatees. For some periods 95 percent of admittances were in priority categories. The Authority's statistics show that by 1954, 75 to 80 percent of all applicants were black. While a high proportion of the white applicants were considered eligible and were allowed to make formal application, almost half the blacks were found to be ineligible for registration and were not permitted to complete their applications. At the next stage whites, even without priority, were quickly referred to projects, while black families might have had to wait for over a year. The Executive Secretary admitted that this practice constituted a "double standard."

Goals Shrink. "Models" Come in Vogue

Unable to do anything significant about the massive housing needs of the black community, the reformers on the CHA staff devoted considerable attention to making some of the projects successful bi-racial operations. Since they were no longer part of a movement dealing with social and economic fundamentals, many of the New Deal-type reformers projected a racial program of creating models of

integration — a more modest proposal which they thought was within their grasp. On an operating basis CHA management continued to define the problem as how to keep whites in these projects. Their solution was a two-fold quota system: Whites were given priority and quickly placed in the bi-racial projects; blacks were limited in number and carefully screened so that the most stable families, usually with a father who was a veteran, were admitted to these units. At one point Miss Wood even made the argument that more housing was needed inside the ghetto in order to take the pressure of demand off the bi-racial projects. On the other hand, in four projects in all white communities the staff was forbidden to admit any black families. The racial quotas, both where the staff was trying to maintain what they considered model bi-racial projects and in the lily-white projects, were regulated by a coding scheme. At the time of registration the whites' applications were designated A and the blacks' were designated B. Operating personnel were instructed by elaborate memoranda that allocated priorities for A's and B's for each project and according to the bedroom size of the apartment. These priorities were imposed by management in addition to the statutorily authorized priorities for veterans and families relocated by land clearance. The coding system provided a mechanism for discrimination and racial manipulation that was not visible to the applicants or tenants. In the case of the four lily-white projects, there was an additional control that no black family was to be admitted without the specific authorization of the Commissioners. In the case of one of these projects the staff had tried to prevail upon the Commissioners to desegregate it. They had gone so far as to line up what they deemed to be four model black families who wanted to move and were willing to be pioneers, but the Commissioners were not swayed.

The accidents of race mixing, however, managed to overcome the most elaborate precautions of the Commissioners. In 1953 the light-skinned wife in a black family made application for housing at Trumbull Park Homes in the far southern part of Chicago. The clerk mistook her race and accorded her the speedy priority placement that was granted to white families. When she and her darker husband moved in, a riot of major proportion occurred. Police protection for the black family was minimal and negligent. The Mayor refused to take a strong public stand supporting the rights of the blacks; his Housing and Redevelopment Coordinator was apologetic for the police negligence. After considerable pressure was exerted, CHA finally moved in several other black families into Trumbull Park to signify publicly that they would back up the accidental desegregation. But the rioting continued. When black business leaders organized a protest march around

City Hall after the president of their Chamber of Commerce had been roughed up by a mob out there, the leadership of the white business community unsuccessfully exerted great influence to have the protest called off. After two years of mob violence the Authority finally stabilized the situation with a quota of 30 black families at Trumbull. It is interesting to note that the autobiographical novel written by one of the black men who moved into Trumbull Park portrays no special interest in a bi-racial neighborhood on the part of the black families out there. However, they were willing to face considerable risk to escape the miserable housing that was being forced on them in the ghetto.

This affair gave the CHA Commissioner the opportunity to force Miss Wood out as Executive Secretary. The ground work had been laid before when James C. Downs, Jr., the Mayor's Housing and Redevelopment Co-ordinator, had recommended to the Commissioners a management study conducted by outside consultants. Since the Commissioners had no specific cause for firing Miss Wood, they used this study as a cover to ease her out. The consultants recommended that CHA establish the position of Executive Director. Miss Wood could be retained in an ambiguous capacity, but the duties were to be passed on to the new office. The consultants' report accomplished the Commissioners' purpose, for in the face of this put-down Miss Wood resigned.

She saw the forcing of her resignation as a direct outcome of her policy of desegregation.

The long and short of the Authority's racial relations policy is that the Commissioners are either unwilling, unable, or afraid to come to grips with it. The result has been that the Negro families who have moved into Trumbull Park Homes live in a state of fear and isolation, subject to constant harassment. The result has been that Trumbull has become the shame of Chicago and the shame of the Nation.

In the course of this essay we have examined the dynamics of all the groups that were significant forces in the issues with the exception of those white working class and lower middle class communities that instigated Trumbull Park riots and related actions. In a sense they were trying to accomplish by violence what the central business district organizations, the real estate promoters, the universities and hospitals were accomplishing through the exercise of the power of the state. In fact, these prestigious bodies were actively removing black people while the white communities were just maintaining a status quo. The racism of the establishment organizations was defined as legitimate, whereas in the case of the low prestige groups it was defined as *hooliganism*. In both cases, as far as the subjugation of blacks was concerned, it was unadulterated racism. Only that of the white neighborhoods, stood out more nakedly than that of prestigious institutions behind urban redevelopment, for the former were not able to cover their pursuit of continuity and stability with the mantle of large-scale civic purposes. The bigotry of the white middle-class and working class community was always directly perceivable, while that of the business and professional institutions was often effectively presented as being instrumental to some greater social goal.

The rationale of these lower status white communities was based upon a combination of their racist hatred of blacks and a realistic recognition of the oppressive characteristics of a ghetto which they desired to avoid. They narrowly viewed their immediate alternatives as the loss of their neighborhood or solidarity against the blacks. From experience they knew that speculators with ample financial backing were waiting to create a panic neighborhood by exploiting the housing needs of the blacks and their own fear. In the era of McCarthyism and the Cold War, these

groups had lost the ability to project new social and political alternatives. They were reduced to taking their alternatives as they found them and crassly defending what they considered to be their immediate interests. Limited as to power and options, these lower status white groups certainly bear less culpability than the dominant financial interests and government bodies which had structured their alternatives in this constricted way.

Reservations in the City

When Miss Wood was forced out, the Chicago Housing Authority virtually ceased to be an independent agency. Internally the agency clarified any ambiguity and gnawing doubts they might have had over their segregationist policies. In rewriting the agency's non-discrimination policy, Van Allen Carlisle, its General Counsel, informed the new Executive Director, General W. E. Kean, "it is so worded as to affirm that a program of integration is underway without spelling out in detail what the program is." Hypocrisy was made a matter of policy.

The time was now ripe to launch an extensive new building program which would serve the interests of the growing number of redevelopment programs without having to pay heed to the needs either of CHA's low-income black constituents or to the concerns of reform-minded groups. Despite the increasing pace of demolition and the stated position of the city administration that in regard to relocation housing it would "take in every unit available under the Federal allocation for Chicago," there had been only two small extensions for existing projects approved in the four years since the big battle between the Housing Authority and the City Council over sites. In the first half of 1955, CHA requested the City Council to approve some 25 sites, four of which were in white neighborhoods. From this batch the Council approved four sites for approximately 4,400 housing units. They were all in overwhelmingly black neighborhoods. During the course of gaining this approval, General Kean, entered into an agreement with Alderman William Murphy, chairman of the Housing and Planning Committee, that CHA would informally submit any proposed housing sites for clearance by the committee and by the Alderman in whose ward it was located. If either one vetoed the site, CHA would withdraw the proposal. This agreement went through several redraftings, incorporating several suggestions from James Downs, the Mayor's Housing and Redevelopment Coordinator.

The Kean-Murphy agreement for the pre-clearance of sites was not considered fool-proof enough. The possibility existed that after an Alderman agreed to a site, some of his constituents would object. If CHA only submitted to the City Council just enough sites to use up their allotment of housing from the federal government and then one of the Aldermen at the behest of his constituents would withdraw a site, Chicago would not get all the housing that had been allocated to it. In order to avoid the risk of leaving a deficit in the housing program should the Alderman eliminate some of the pre-cleared sites, the Authority agreed that it would always submit to the City Council sites for twice the number of apartments it needed. The extra sites were always chosen from locations within the black community. Therefore, in some years CHA gave the appearance of recommending sites both in white and black neighborhoods, but under the "twice as many as needed" rule they actually had arranged it so that the Council could and would choose all ghetto locations. For example, in 1956 a total of eleven sites were recommended in the CHA proposed ordinance. Of these, two were in white neighborhoods. The Council's Housing Committee recommended only four of the sites all of which were within the ghetto. The remainder were deleted from the ordinance as passed.

The arrangement between the CHA and the City Council proved to be remarkably effective. From the execution of the Kean-Murphy agreement through 1968, the Authority had either constructed or had under development 10,256 family apartments. Of these, thirty were located in two major white urban renewal areas and another thirty-three were in a neighborhood which was majority white. The remaining 10,193 apartments, about 99.4 percent of the total, were located within the black ghetto.

It will be recalled that in the confusion arising out of the battle between the Authority and the City Council in 1950, the compromise batch of sites was so chosen that it displaced almost as many families by CHA clearance as were provided for by the new public housing. This goof-up was not repeated. Although the subsequent sites for regular family housing were virtually all within the extremely crowded ghetto, only about one-third as many dwelling units were demolished as were constructed by CHA. Commercial and industrial sites were used so that public housing could get a net gain in units and be able to absorb families relocated from urban renewal projects elsewhere. For example, the University of Chicago sponsored clearance in the Hyde Park area moved out over 5,000 households, most of which were black. Of these families approximately 900 of them went into public housing.

Despite this amazing record the Housing Authority proved that it was able to acquire sites outside the ghetto. After 1960 CHA developed a special program of separate projects for the elderly. Of the 31 elderly projects that were in occupancy, as of 1968, 15 were in predominately white areas and 5 were in racially mixed areas. A de facto policy of segregation has been effectively maintained in the elderly housing. The Commissioners guaranteed racial separation when they established priority for admission to individual projects. Under a proximity rule, those persons living closest to the specific site were given first choice. The existing residential segregation in Chicago assured segregation in the elderly projects then. This policy was so blatantly discriminatory that the Public Housing Administration eventually forced CHA to drop the proximity rule. Nevertheless, occupancy within the elderly units is still basically segregated today.

Although during the 1960's more white families than black families were eligible for public housing, the policies of CHA made the agency over into an effective Jim Crow operation. With the exception of the four projects in the all white neighborhood, which today have very small quotas of black families in them, 99 percent of the occupants in the family units are black. Since whites will not live in the ghetto, they had as CHA officials admit, been effectively cut off from public housing. The existence of a potential white demand for public housing is indicated by the results from the leasing program which was established a few years ago. In most cases individual families have made an arrangement with the landlord to lease an apartment. When the family's eligibility is certified, the Authority makes up the difference between the standard rent which it charges the tenants and the market rent which it pays the landlord. Of the over 1,100 units in the leasing program as of August, 1968, 87.6 percent were occupied by whites.

Humane Vision Compromised

Containment of black people in places where they would not cause trouble to the white world became the function of the Authority's program. An eclipse of the original humane vision of the staff became necessary for this new pattern of operation. Bureaucratic routine serving whatever policy that was dominant was to become the order of the day. Two years before she was forced out Elizabeth Wood had already observed this process at work:

When a public service compromises its soul through timidity, decay of administration takes over. Instead of courage in making decisions, memoranda come into existence; a multiplication of forms and rules and procedures, the paraphernalia — the illness of bureaucracy. And with that piles up inefficiency, and all the characteristics worthy of cynicism and contempt.

The situation of the social reformer was analagous to that of the intellectual in the bureaucracy about which Merton has written: "It appears that the state bureaucracy exerts a pressure upon the alienated intellectual to accommodate himself to the policies of those who make the strategic decisions, with the result that, in time, the role of the one time alienated intellectual may become indistinguishable from that of the technician."

The rule book comes to determine the destiny of the subjects' lives. The clientele begins to exist for the convenience of the bureaucracy. A stark example of the way tenants became frozen into the molds set by the administration was evidenced by the policy on transfers from one project to another: In 1955 there were only three grounds upon which a family could be granted a transfer into a different project: (1) a serious health problem; (2) length of travel time to or from employment exceeding two hours; or (3) change in family size, requiring a different size unit which would not be available in the tenant's present project for an extended period of time. In 1963, after considerable complaint, these rules were slightly liberalized. The extent of the liberalization is best indicated by the change in the length of travel time rule. A tenant now had grounds for a transfer if it took him an hour and a half to get to work. These rules constituted a variation on serfdom wherein peasants are bound to the soil. Controls of this kind simplified management procedures and make it virtually impossible for black tenants to apply for the lily-white projects.

Many of the bureaucratic rules became elaborated so as to provide protection to the staff from allegations of wrong-doing. Since the tenants are powerless, there is no worry about accusations from them. In the bureaucracy's calculation of self-interest, it is charges from the powerful that can hurt. To ward off accusations of fiscal irregularities, the Authority has so hedged in its purchasing procedures that they take an intolerably long time to respond to any needs of the tenants. A tragic illustration of this type of protecting the bureaucracy occurred in the summer of 1968 when a three year old child plunged to her death as a screen fell out of the window of the showcase Raymond Hilliard Center. The project manager explained to an irate crowd the next night that he had known the screens were defective when he first came to this project eighteen months before. He admitted "I saw the screens blowing out of windows on a windy day." The manager claimed that he put in a request for new screens immediately. Yet, procedures of getting approval, waiting until bids were let, the bankruptcy of one firm, re-initiation of the process, etc., were so drawn out that he still did not expect the new screens for another six months. The Authority had gone through the needlessly elaborate procedures specified so that no staff individual had to run the risk of being personally culpable for the misuse of money. Meantime a black baby had needlessly been killed — CHA did not have to worry as the storm over the child quickly passed — culpability over the lives of poor blacks does not cause the powerful to give you trouble.

An atmosphere of fear and intimidation prevails in the projects. Since the low-income black families have few alternatives to public housing except high priced slums, the general prescription of a wardship role has been heightened in their case. The rules are kept as a mystery which only the

professional staff can unlock. Tenants organizations are denied access to the operating manuals. Threats of eviction are frequently used to create a sense of dependency and make the tenants more manageable. Management reinforces this definition of a child-like role by acting as an arbitrary parent; for example, CHA once evicted without a hearing the families of some twenty convicted and suspected juvenile delinquents. The Housing Authority had expected the approval of many of the tenants that had complained of juvenile violence and crime. Instead, some of the same people that complained resented the manipulateness of a dictate without redress and were up in arms that families were being forced out without due process. While making a few procedural concessions, the Chairman of CHA successfully maintained the right of the Authority to decide what was good for the tenants. Since 50 percent of the families in CHA receive some form of public assistance, they are subject to similar kinds of wardship controls from the public welfare agency. Precinct captains, too, exploit this dependency by threatening eviction and removal from housing or welfare roles if the tenants do not vote as instructed.

Tenants and Community Relations Aides are members of the management staff at every project with an assignment to work with Building Councils composed of tenants. These aides and Councils are looked upon by many tenants as devices for management spying. People believe that CHA only wanted them to join the councils so that the aides could learn more about them. The manager of one project acknowledged that the staff dominated the work of the organizations, choosing and stimulating those activities that would make the staff member look good. This same manager did not think that the Councils had influenced any of his decisions.

Rather than representing the tenants' interests to management, the Community and Tenants Relations Aides usually carry out minor enforcement functions for management. Above all they helped structure a situation in which the tenants cannot genuinely act in their own interests. As a report of one aide's encounter with an independent community organization reads:

He said, "I managed to rout them. They went under . . . Either they survived or I survived. They were going to put me under, so I put them under." He was not opposed to the purposes of the new organizations, and, in fact, he claimed that they stole his groups' programs. He did not like the fact that they were trying to usurp the relationships that he had built with the tenants without any respect for him, and so he subtly used these relationships to weaken and destroy the new organization. He ended by commenting, "Community organization is almost as bad as politics and business. [So many] connivances."

However, honors and other signs of esteem are so hard to come by in such a subjugated community that many people greatly value recognition by management at the same time that they resent their own dependency. Under these conditions distribution of minor honorific symbols, such as pushing a tenant for a building council presidency becomes another mechanism of control. Favors on the order of having repairs done quickly is also a means for management to keep its following. Even the recent development of sub-professional aides from the tenant ranks has been used as a patronage weapon to increase the power from above.

Domestic Colonialism

It is little wonder a study conducted by the Chicago Board of Health showed that tenants who seek shelter in public housing state that what they liked best about the

dwelling is its physical safety from fires, rats, vermin, and unsafe structures. What they most despised were operations of management such as "snooping, annual income reviews, restrictions, rules and regulations, service charges, and five day notices for tardy rent." Interestingly, once the oppressive character of the housing system had been well-established in terms of rules and norms, in a manner similar to many colonial government agencies an increasingly larger percentage of black professionals were hired to fill the prescribed lower level roles.

Analogies between the Chicago Housing Authority and local units of a colonial administration are painfully apt. The Robert Taylor Homes which were approved by the City Council in 1956 and completed in 1962 presents the most startling example of a colonial type compound. 27,000 black people live in 4300 dwelling units situated in 28 massive concrete slabs. The project stretches for two miles alongside railroad tracks and an expressway on the west and a rundown commercial strip on the east. Further to the north other CHA projects contain 4,000 more units for more than two miles. The first manager of Robert Taylor claimed that its location was part of a political design. "We had to build here," he said, "because Negro aldermen wanted those extra votes; when you build straight up like this, you inflate a constituency. Similarly, the white aldermen . . . were against our moving out."

Much like the Bantu reservations in South Africa, Robert Taylor is populated by women and children while the men go elsewhere to squeeze out a living in marginal jobs and marginal roles. Minor children there number almost 21,000; the majority of the families are classified as "broken homes." Youngsters are incapsulated in the project. The Chicago Board of Education failed to build enough schools so that when families moved in the classrooms were fantastically over-crowded. Some of the apartments were converted to school rooms, with the result that children had to wait until third grade to get outside the reservation. Recreation facilities, other than outdoor fields, consist of

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one gymnasium and one medium-sized swimming pool. One small, financially starved settlement house served the whole project.

Pressed under by the controls of the Housing Authority, the welfare system and the very successful Third Ward Democratic Organization, — diminished in self-respect through the numerous degradation ordeals through which they must pass — the tenants of Robert Taylor have never been able to form any effective grass roots organizations to represent themselves. Black militants, independent political aspirants, and civil rights groups have all tried and failed so far. At this stage none of these groups is strong enough to offer any protection, and the tenants correctly assess their personal positions as being very vulnerable. Among the young, therefore, frustration forms inward and seeks release in violence and aggression towards persons and property within the project. Frantz Fanon's generalizations about colonized people seem to apply here:

The colonised man will first manifest this aggressiveness which has been deposited in his bones against his own people. This is the period when the niggers beat each other up, and the police and magistrates do not know which way to turn when faced with the astonishing waves of crime. . . . When the native is confronted with the colonial order of things, he finds he is in a state of permanent tension. The settler's world is a hostile world, which spurns the native, but at the time it is a world of which he is envious. We have seen that the native never ceases to dream of putting himself in the place of the settler — not of becoming the settler but of substituting himself for the settler.

Much the same reasoning was used by the manager of Robert Taylor in defending himself to the CHA top officials regarding some remarks he made to a visiting magazine correspondent:

[The author] would, I'm sure, quite agree with writer James Baldwin who has said that people living in segregated housing projects hate them for the same reason they hate policemen: they reveal, unbearably, the real attitude of the white world toward the Negro minority. White people put them there, Baldwin said, because they don't think Negroes are good enough to live anywhere else. And, I'm afraid there are some people living at Taylor Homes today who do harbor deep-felt resentments, hostilities, and bitterness, and are overtly distrustful of management and the Housing Authority. And I don't doubt that some project youngsters vent their hostilities and resentments by destroying CHA property.

The character of the top leadership reflects the nature of the rule. After a few years of General Kean's leadership, he was succeeded as Executive Director by Alvin Rose, an ex-head of the city welfare department, who received the appointment as a patronage sop after he had lost out in a battle over the consolidation of the city and the county welfare departments. Mr. Rose's contempt for the tenants was reflected in a speech before a national audience, where he spoke of "after taking the family out of the slum, taking the slum out of the family." He thought conservative criticism would be overcome by spreading "the notion that the taxpayer has been getting ten dollars worth of protection as a result of our efforts — for every dollar we spend." For about five years he provided the kind of leadership he thought the City Hall wanted. Then effective direction passed over to the new Chairman of the Commissioners, Charles Swibel. Rose largely contented himself for the remaining few years with encouraging a Boy Scout program in the projects.

Swibel was a slumlord and real estate promoter connected with some of the most powerful politicians and

trade union moguls in the city. In return for his taking the heat as the head of CHA, Swibel has been repaid by getting official clearance for large real estate developments which have netted him tremendous promotional profits. Mr. Swibel has also tried to capitalize on his relationship with black people. When Martin Luther King, Jr. was leading the Chicago Freedom Movement in the summer of 1966, Swibel unsuccessfully tried to head off his campaign through a proposed deal involving some minor concessions from CHA. Swibel has been a party to the Summit Agreement which the City Fathers eventually signed with Dr. King. The Authority's breach of this agreement has been thoroughly documented by civil rights groups and even the staid, official Leadership Council on Housing.

CHA, under Charles Swibel's leadership, opposed down to the wire the Gautreaux suit in which the Federal Courts eventually found the Authority to be unconstitutionally discriminatory against blacks. The court order settling this suit requires that for every new unit built or leased in the black neighborhoods, three units will have to be placed in white areas. While this plan is no substitute for a real political settlement, it will require CHA to function quite differently or cease to build. Adoption of the latter alternative would work to defeat the redevelopment objectives of the present Chicago Comprehensive Plan which is predicated upon the building or leasing of an additional 35,000 public housing units over a 15 year period.

In assessing his first five years as chairman, which ended shortly before the Gautreaux decision, Mr. Swibel listed high among the achievements: "We have made an important contribution to the renewal of the city, not only directly but indirectly in that we have accommodated families living in the path of the renewal projects of other public and private redevelopers." The way is no longer so smooth for this process to continue in the future without upsetting the status quo of racial controls both outside and inside the Chicago Housing Authority.

Planning by Judiciary

The Federal Court decision of February 1969 determining that CHA's policy was one of segregation and discrimination, has become the new focal point for the planning of public housing in the Chicago area. In the face of a determined strategy of foot dragging and resistance on the part of the Housing Authority and the city administration, the courts have issued a series of implementing orders which have increasingly set administrative direction and have involved other federal housing operations. Although the controversy over this question has remained front page news, in three and a half years time the substantive results have almost been nil. The Gautreaux case, by disrupting normal administrative procedures, has brought to the surface many of the contradictions in the ruling of Chicago. However, a judicial procedure cannot bring forth the social forces capable of resolving or superceding such profound contradictions.

Remedy through the court system had become the only way to bring a halt to CHA's program for the extension of ghetto reservations. Although the Gautreaux decision was of landmark stature, and the court has played an unusually strong role in implementing its order, recourse to a judicial strategy reflected the underlying weakness of the civil rights movement and the inability of the burgeoning black community movement to marshal forces for a sustained issue that had such high stakes for the whole metropolitan area. No organized black group or interest with a strong power base was able to interpose itself to provide a new vision of community development and the political muscle to bring it about. Fears regarding the potential of such an

interposition, as had been possibly foreshadowed by the social conflict throughout the 1960's, was the necessary precondition for the court's strong position. Threat of disorder, while it might gain concessions regarding an immediate aggravation, does not provide a sufficient basis for the overturning and restructuring of a major oppressive relationship. Stalemate, accordingly, has been the net outcome so far of the court ordered planning.

A brief review of the judicial events is necessary to understand the various dynamics at work. The case was brought as a class action by the Illinois Division of the American Civil Liberties under the direction of Alexander Polikoff as chief counsel. The Chicago Urban League cooperated in providing non-legal research. The original February 1969 decision came as a surprise to both sides. The court did not bother to hear the case, but issued a summary judgment based on the evidence that had been established in pre-trial procedures. The Housing authority proceeded as though the enforcement of the decision would just be *pro forma* and did not provide Judge Austin with any serious proposals for remedying the situation. Under these circumstances, he basically accepted the ACLU's recommendation in his implementation order in July of that year. The essentials of this decree provided that: after the completion of the units already under development, the next 700 units would be located in white areas; thereafter, three-fourths of all new family units were to be located outside black neighborhoods; one-fourth of the new family units could be placed in the suburbs; new projects were to be designed so that families with children would not be placed above the third story; the units were to be sufficiently scattered so that they would not be a dominating land usage in any particular area; and the CHA was to use its best efforts to develop a substantial number of new units and promote their acceptance. The court thought that this procedure would realistically open up public housing to white families again and stipulated that families in the neighborhood of the new projects would have a priority for half the units.

To say the least, CHA's best efforts were none too good. Although the Authority's staff did identify a large number of vacant sites, it refused to proceed with their processing with the intention of delaying any presentation of sites to the City Council until after the expected triumphant reelection of Mayor Daley in April 1971. The judge, who had had something of a political falling out with Daley about ten years before, ordered CHA to submit sites for 1500 apartments to the City Council promptly. This order was unsuccessfully fought all the way up to the Supreme Court, and the Authority had to submit the sites a month before the mayoral election. Mayor Daley denounced the sites as part of his successful election strategy.

HUD Became Involved

In the meantime, the Civil Liberties Union revived a suit against the Department of Housing and Urban Development that made the same allegations as those against CHA. Judge Austin dismissed this suit, but he was reversed by a higher court. The two cases were consolidated and a summary judgment was entered against HUD, making the federal agency a party to remedying the situation.

During the course of this process HUD began to take some administrative initiative by threatening to withhold Model Cities funds if the city did not provide more low-income housing in the coming year. After the election was out of the way, Mayor Daley made an agreement with CHA and HUD on a timetable to complete the City Council's approval of 1500 public housing units before the end of the year. HUD consented to releasing \$26,000,000 for the next year's operation of the Model Cities program upon the ap-

proval of the first batch of sites in June.

By September the City Council had fallen behind on its site approval timetable. ACLU brought this matter before the court, and the judge enjoined HUD from releasing the \$26,000,000 in Model Cities money until the city approved a substantial number of sites. This order held until March, 1972 when the U.S. Court of Appeals overturned it on the grounds that Model Cities was a separate program from public housing. The stalling of the building of low-income housing did cause HUD on its own to withdraw \$20,000,000 of urban renewal money that had been set aside for Chicago and, thereby, put a damper on the purchase of redevelopment land in some 29 deteriorated communities.

City Council By-Passed

The legal thicket has become more complicated as the ACLU, in order to force implementation of the court's decrees, got Judge Austin to order the CHA to by-pass the Illinois law requiring the City Council's approval and to proceed independently with the development of 1500 units. Although this ruling is under appeal, the higher courts have denied a stay of execution. CHA has until August 8th to come up with a final plan for the sites for 1500 public housing units, 1300 of which have to be in white neighborhoods. So far it has made public proposals for almost 2000 units on over 600 sites. After a specified consideration of public reaction, the Authority will narrow down the list. A hostile reaction to these sites has been organized in many of the white communities with a massive letter writing campaign and with individual alderman holding local hearings.

The production of housing for low-income families has ground to a halt. In the three and a half years since the original court order, only 154 family units have been approved and cleared for site acquisition. The leasing of units, generally in older buildings, also remains at a low level with only 669 family units, compared to over 2200 leased apartments for the elderly. Interestingly, this virtual halt to expansion does not represent a change of trend. In the period 1963 to 1969, in spite of the fact that more than 11,000 low-income family units were demolished, the city only built or leased 1580 dwelling units for families, compared to 6600 for elderly. This lack of new low-income housing is inconsistent with plans for extensive rehabilitation of the many deteriorating neighborhoods in Chicago. Therefore, even the federal administrators, who are usually loathe to act in such a situation, have slowed up the demolition of housing. Evidently in Chicago both the public and private powers who control land and housing development prefer the current stalemate to possible political backlash.

Both CHA and ACLU have taken the position that the need for low-income housing can only be met on a metropolitan-wide basis. The private housing industry, whose activity is greatly concentrated in the suburbs, is providing no new low-income housing and little moderate-income housing. Most of the new moderate-income housing is in the form of mobile homes, and the remainder is built with federal interest subsidies. Although suburban building is increasingly a planned operation for comprehensive housing, commercial and industrial development by giant corporations on tracts of a square mile and up, there is no provision for low-income families. CHA's metropolitan approach so far has been limited to an agreement with the Cook County Housing authority for co-operative development of 500 units of low-income family over the next three years.

ACLU is now in court pushing for an order directing both CHA and HUD to develop 60,000 low-income dwellings throughout the entire metropolitan region. At this stage there appears to be resistance to this idea upon the

part of the court and the federal and local authorities. The threat of court action, plus a shortage of housing for a necessary blue collar and service worker labor supply, has encouraged some of the suburban mayors to investigate the possibility of a "fair-share" plan for spreading low-income homes in all suburbs.

Evanston — The Enlightened

Public housing is virtually non-existent in the parts of the metropolitan area outside Chicago. Cook County has 500 units located in suburban ghettos, and there is even less in the remaining five counties. Resistance to low-income housing on the part of the well-off suburbs gives every indication of being as strong as that of the working class white neighborhoods within Chicago. The sophisticated suburbs do give promise of being able to carry off their resistance with greater style.

Regarding the reception of public housing, the case of Evanston is illustrative. It is one of the handful of suburban cities even to consider any kind of public housing, including that for the elderly. Seemingly it would be the seat of enlightenment on this question — the home of a major university; influenced by a politically aggressive black community comprising 15% of the population; the white community is well educated, generally affluent, with a rapidly growing proportion of liberal professionals. Midst great controversy, the city is considering building 50 family units and 100 elderly units of public housing. Almost all the heat has been centered on the units for low-income families. The boundaries of the controversy are far more significant than the alternatives. A city with 27,000 dwelling units and a couple of thousand low income families is in virtual consensus that almost no housing should be provided for these people. The conservatives hold that there should be no public housing, and the liberals differ only to the degree that they consider 50 family units to be the politically feasible maximum. Woe unto the poor and black in suburbs of lesser enlightenment!

No Change in the Compounds

Inside the existing public housing compounds, the oppressive character of life remains virtually the same. Some changes have taken place as federal monies appropriated as concessions to the racial unrest of the 1960's have filtered out to the local programs. Since 1968, \$38,000,000 has been allocated to a modernization program for the refurbishing of apartments and construction of community centers and day care facilities. Rents have been cut for the lowest income families but so have certain operations previously supported by these rents. As could be expected, the physical improvements have not created a self-determining community. In fact, the large projects are increasingly taking on the character of an armed camp.

Even minor concessions require major battle to have them implemented. The federal guidelines require that an active tenants advisory council participate in the development of the modernization plans. In 1971 the Chicago Housing Tenant's Organization had to fight CHA for six months in order to obtain the election of a bona fide advisory council that had at least some possibility of being something other than a mouthpiece for the management. This concession was only obtained when the tenant's organization was able to get HUD to withhold \$8,000,000 of modernization funds until a bona fide advisory council was established.

The future of public housing remains bleak. An alien bureaucracy charged with a policy of containment can never be an instrument of liberation. Only an accelerated political and social development of the total black com-



munity offers the possibility of a non-repressive resolution of the present impasse. In terms of life within the public housing reservations, only a developed, self-directing community can provide the legitimacy and vision to forge the kind of viable social institutions needed under such hostile conditions.

Blacks Not Consulted

Regarding prospective housing development on the metropolitan scene, there is no satisfactory way of meeting the needs of black and/or poor people without these groups having their own powerful instrumentalities that can intervene in the political process. Any system of law fundamentally embodies the rule for the maintenance of the position of the dominant groups or classes within society — plus the concession that these groups must make in order to insure the continuance of their rule. Therefore, public policy or judicial judgment will not represent the interests, even in a sub-ordinated manner, of a group that lacks sufficient power to win concessions. The virtual disappearance of the civil rights movement and the stagnation in the development of the black community and liberation movements have removed much of the force that made the initial breakthrough against the segregationist public housing practices possible.

There are many analogies between the situation of the ACLU attorneys today and that of former CHA director Elizabeth Wood after the decline of the New Deal. Both groups were able to play path breaking roles based on a combination of their own competency and dedication with a political situation that allowed a bold kind of brokerage between a potentially disruptive social force and the status quo. In one case the brokerage was carried out through the powers of Mayor Kelly, in the other, through the judicial powers of Judge Austin. In neither case did the potential disruptive forces cohere into independent and enduring powers.

In the Gautreaux case, ACLU was in effect its own client. It did not seek to subordinate itself to any black group, nor did any powerful black organizations demand a key role in shaping the remedies offered the court. Effectively, a group of white liberals were setting basic goals in terms of their own definition of the public interest, which in this case turned out to be that of ghetto dispersion. Such a construction of public interest looks at the oppressed black community and concludes that the only way to get rid of the oppression is to get rid of the black community. It operates upon the liberals' faith that a diaspora within their midst is both possible and desirable.

A viable, strong black organization might well have placed its priorities on strengthening the black community, regarding both the manner in which it spread beyond the current ghetto boundaries and the way that it restructured itself within its present territories, including the existing public housing projects. Only these latter priorities address themselves to the creation of the social and political forces that can resolve the situation.

Rich Get Twice as Much as Poor

Lest, the reader think that the public housing system provides an inordinate subsidy to low income black families, let us review a little financial data. The cost of building the housing has been large. Robert Taylor Homes cost an

average of over \$16,000 per unit some seven years ago. Some more recent projects have cost as much as \$20,000 per unit. This is as much as many middle-income, private, for-profit projects have cost in Chicago. Yet, the quality the families in public housing have received is poor in comparison. The suspicion is that, as is often the case in Chicago, the high cost of public works have gone into the pockets of inside land speculators and construction firms. Padded costs in Chicago are revealed by comparative costs. In 1959, bids on similar projects in Chicago and New York were respectively, \$20,580 and \$15,340 per unit — despite the fact that the general index of high rise building was 15.8 percent higher for New York. Direct benefits to promoters says nothing of the enormous indirect benefits to those firms, social classes and institutions that gained so much from urban renewal for which public housing was so necessary.

Alvin Schorr of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, has made the calculations that in 1962 the Federal government spent about 820 million dollars to subsidize housing for poor people — roughly the bottom 20 percent of the families according to income. The upper 20 percent received a federal subsidy to their housing costs of 1.7 billion dollars. "A family in the uppermost fifth got about twice as much, on the average, as a poor family." As usual, the benefits derived from controlling a system and subjugating a people far outweighed the costs of exercising those controls. ■

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Social Ills, Scandals, Immense Cost Plague Housing Program

by William Lilley III and Timothy B. Clark

Federal low-income housing programs are nearing total collapse.

They have been overwhelmed by massive concentrations of poor people in the center cities and plagued by scandals, abandonment, and rising costs.

The 35-year-old public housing program is in particularly desperate straits. In cities around the country, public housing tenants no longer are contributing enough rent to keep the projects solvent, and the federal government has undertaken to subsidize operation, as well as construction, for local public housing authorities. Cities are unable or unwilling to provide services enough to make the public housing neighborhoods clean or safe, and there are few jobs for tenants. So increasingly, public housing projects have suffered from abandonment.

Programs to provide rental and ownership housing for the poor, enacted as part of President Johnson's Great Society legislative program, are faring little better. The large proportion of the units built in poor, black center-city areas is, like the public housing, plagued by poor city services, a dearth of nearby employment opportunities, and other problems.

Costs

The taxpayers' bill for these failing programs is staggering now and is growing by leaps and bounds.

In fiscal 1973, annual disbursements under the low-income housing programs will reach at least \$3 billion. By fiscal 1978, the tab will be at least \$7.5 billion.

And the federal government cannot shut off the tap. Even if it ended the programs in the immediate future, which it will not, long-term commitments to pay for housing units already completed or started would cost, in current dollars, at least \$65 billion and possibly as much as \$92.7 billion over the next 40 years.

The Brookings Institution, in a report issued in late May, said that federal taxes would have to be increased to finance current and new programs over the next four years, failing substantial cuts in federal budget outlays which Brookings considered unlikely.

Dilemma

The Brookings report, characterized as "an epitaph for the Great Society" by *The New York Times*, also argues that the multiplicity of federal social programs enacted over the past decade has failed, proving that money and federal

intentions alone cannot provide solutions to societal dilemmas.

And that conclusion, as it applies to federal low-income housing programs, is not disputed by Nixon men or by Democrats in Congress.

Yet neither party has even begun to think through alternative ways to meet the goal of providing decent housing for the poor.

This year's Housing and Urban Development Act (S 3248), now nearing enactment, continues the programs without substantial changes, even though the measure will make sweeping reforms in other HUD Department programs.

Thus the HUD Department, as part of the \$3 billion it will spend on subsidized housing in the coming fiscal year, will disburse \$500 million to begin construction of new units. That \$500 million will commit the federal government to some \$17.5 billion in additional outlays over the next 40 years.

But converging trends affecting the housing programs will force change before long — even if that change simply takes the form of the demise or drastic reduction of the federal commitment to provide shelter for the poor.

HUD

In his 10th-floor office overlooking Washington's southwest urban renewal section — where abandonment already is a problem after complete redevelopment of the area less than 15 years ago — HUD Secretary George W. Romney talks in grim terms of the housing programs he supervises.

He seems a man awaiting disaster, feeling that his department's programs and perhaps his own reputation could easily be destroyed by the massive racial and social problems that are concentrating in the cities.

In private interviews and in public statements, Romney even goes so far as to suggest that "the critical mass" of urban problems is so large as to dictate that the housing programs should be shut off entirely in large areas of center cities.

On April 10, testifying before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on HUD-Space-Science-Veterans, he said: "I am telling you here today that I am taking a look at the question of whether I am going to tell 20 cities in this country, 'There are certain areas of your city we are not going to put any more money in because it will be wasted, because the social conditions and other considerations do not justify it.'"

*HUD Secretary George W. Romney (left),
and Rep. John S. Monagan, D-Conn.*



Politicians would press him to change that decision, Romney said, because he would be "dictating the death of certain of these central-city areas."

But, he continued, "I am telling you that they are not viable and they are not areas of acceptable risk." He cited Detroit as an example.

Congress

Congressional Democrats and Republicans alike say they are upset by the course of the housing programs, although few offer ready solutions.

For example, a leading Democratic housing expert in Congress, Rep. Thomas L. Ashley of Ohio, says he believes it "impossible that the programs will stay unchanged for another year. The cities are disintegrating and the housing programs are contributing to the rot."

And Rep. Benjamin B. Blackburn, R-Ga., like Ashley, a senior member of the House Banking and Currency Subcommittee on Housing, says: "More and more every day I think we ought to stop those programs. They are building housing not in the national interest and are a classic example of how private interest groups get hooked onto federal subsidies."

Scandal

The first change in congressional posture toward the low-income housing programs may well be caused by increasing public exposure of scandals already rife in the programs, according to those who follow the issue in the White House, HUD, and congressional housing committees.

Already, investigations by the press and by congressional committees have concluded that corrupt elements among the real estate, building and banking industries, and the Federal Housing Administration have combined to bilk the inner-city poor and the federal treasury, and that already-ailing urban neighborhoods are being destroyed by that corruption.

Grand juries now are sitting in nine cities where abuses have been prevalent: New York, Philadelphia, Detroit, Washington, Newark, Chicago, Boston, Camden, N.J., and Columbus, Ohio. In the first three cities indictments already have been returned against federal officials and private business interests.

FHA and Housing Subsidies

The federal government's housing programs have two distinguishing characteristics they are very expensive and very complicated.

They did not get that way until the 1960s. Back in 1934 when Congress created the Federal Housing Administration, the government's mission in housing was simply to stabilize the collapsing mortgage credit market and prevent massive foreclosures on housing owned by the middle-class.

To this day, FHA has performed that function spectacularly — even profitably. FHA underwrote construction of the suburbs that now dominate U.S. life. Moreover, the one-half of 1 percent premium which FHA-insured mortgagees pay has kept the agency's operations in the black. Its present bank balance is a hefty \$1.7 billion.

Public Housing

Three years after the creation of FHA, Congress created the Public Housing Administration and gave it the job of housing the upwardly mobile, working poor.

Under the 1937 law, the federal government subsidizes the construction of local public housing projects by making annual contributions to debt service, both for interest and principal, on the 40-year bonds the local public housing agencies have sold to finance project construction.

Over the 35-year existence of the program, 1,271,271 units have been built and the federal government is committed to paying \$41.4 billion over the next 40 years for the debt service on them. On an annual basis the federal government now is paying \$1.2 billion for public housing.

According to the 1937 law, the federal government was to pay only for construction; after that the project was expected to run in the black with the rental income from working tenants paying for the project's maintenance and operation. Thus the program was designed to be self-supporting, just as public housing tenants were expected to be self-supporting.

The social and financial theories behind the public housing program worked up through the 1950s. But in the 1960s they collapsed, as more and more very poor people began to dominate the rent rolls of urban public housing projects. By 1971 almost half of all public housing tenants were on welfare.

In 1969 the government first acknowledged the massive changes that had taken place in public housing by enacting the so-called Brooke amendment, named after its sponsor, Sen. Edward W. Brooke, R-Mass. The law now limits rents in public housing to 25 percent of a tenant's income and authorizes federal operating subsidies to cover local public housing agency deficits.

Subsequent legislative amendments and HUD administrative regulations have made it possible for the very poor to pay no rent at all and, in extreme cases of poverty, even receive "negative rents" from the local public housing agency.

These sweeping social changes in public housing have just begun to have a major impact on the federal budget. Annual operating subsidies for fiscal 1973 will run at about \$200 million and are expected to rise steadily throughout the decade as the number of local agencies in bad financial shape continues to grow.

Agencies in 59 cities now are running big annual deficits and agencies in seven of the biggest cities are within months of totally exhausting their capital reserves. The seven are Chicago, Detroit, Newark, New York, San Francisco, Washington, and Kansas City, Mo.

Programs of the 1960s

The decade of the 1960s saw an explosion of new housing programs. More than a dozen were added by the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968 (82 Stat 476), which President Johnson called "the magna carta of housing."

Section 235 — One major legislative action authorized a new program of homeownership subsidies for low and moderate-income families. Known popularly by its section number (Section 235) in the National Housing Act (12 USC 1701), the program pays for all but 1 percent of the homeowner's mortgage interest.

Since the program was enacted, the government has subsidized the building of 570,400 houses and now is paying out \$550 million annually for mortgage interest subsidies. These payments will continue over the 30-year life of the mortgages and eventually cost the government \$16.5 billion.

Although the program is new, troubles already are appearing, largely because the basic concept of homeownership for the poor seems to be proving unworkable.

A recent in-depth study of the program by the House Appropriations Committee's investigative staff concluded that the poor simply do not have the money or the savoir faire to maintain their own homes and that between 20 percent and 50 percent of all Section 235 units eventually may have to be repossessed by HUD.

Section 236 — Also enacted in 1968 was a companion program providing interest subsidies to help finance rental projects for low-income persons. Known as Section 236, the program serves the same poor and lower-middle-class families that the home ownership program serves. In both programs families are eligible whose incomes do not exceed 135 percent of income-eligibility levels established locally for the public housing program.

To date, the Section 236 program has subsidized the construction of 611,700 units and annual subsidy payments are running at \$550 million. Those payments will continue for 40 more years, the life of the project mortgages, and will total \$22 billion when terminated.

According to the report from the House Appropriations Committee, the Section 236 program already is experiencing the problems plaguing public housing and, to a lesser extent, the Section 235 program. The "economic soundness" of many projects, the report said, is in jeopardy because a growing percentage (now 29 percent) of the tenants are from the welfare rolls.

Twenty-six percent of the projects already are in default and more defaults are expected, the report said. Studies of Section 236 projects in several large cities showed that the program was repeating the mistakes of the public housing program by overbuilding in certain neighborhoods, thereby



Demolition began March 16 at St. Louis' huge Pruitt-Igoe housing project.

creating "devastating" concentrations of subsidized housing.

The report also said 68 percent of the projects were being built primarily to provide tax shelters for private investors who were not directly interested in providing and managing a housing project. Under the Tax Reform Act of 1969 (83 Stat 487), a limited dividend partnership or corporate sponsor of a 236 project can depreciate his project on an accelerated basis as long as the investment is maintained for 10 years. After that period, a large majority of those projects will have to be repossessed by HUD, the report said.

Special risk — Another homeownership-for-the-poor program enacted in 1968 was the Section 223e program which authorized a "special-risk" fund to insure federal underwriting of unsubsidized home mortgages in declining neighborhoods, which previously would not have passed the FHA standard of actuarial soundness. This program is used only to underwrite the purchase of existing housing, whereas the other programs are used almost exclusively for new housing.

The special-risk program has often been linked with a very liberal unsubsidized mortgage insurance (221d2) program, which allows poor families to buy used houses with almost no down payment (\$200) and extremely generous repayment terms. The combination creates purchasing power for the poor comparable to that provided under the 235 subsidy program.

Most of the scandals in the programs thus far have come from unscrupulous manipulation by realtors of the 221d2 plus 223e combination. In Philadelphia and Detroit, HUD is

faced with acquiring as much as \$400 million in slum housing properties that the poor bought, could not maintain and abandoned.

Rent supplements — The other major subsidized housing program operated by the federal government is the rent supplement program enacted by Congress in 1965. It gives subsidies to owners of new multifamily apartment houses. They in turn must pass on savings in construction and operating costs to needy tenants, who are required to pay no more than 25 percent of their income for rent.

To date, the program has subsidized the construction of 1,428 projects and is costing \$280 million annually. Those payments will continue for 40 more years and eventually will amount to \$11.2 billion.

Costs

Housing subsidies constitute one of the most rapidly growing areas of federal expenditures.

In fiscal 1969 the government disbursed only \$385 million for housing subsidies; in fiscal 1973 it will spend about \$3 billion; and in fiscal 1976 housing subsidy costs are projected at \$7.5 billion by the President's Third Annual Report on Housing Goals.

The fastest growing costs are those for the Section 235 and Section 236 programs, first funded in 1969 but already running at the \$1.1-billion level.

The Demolition of Pruitt-Igoe

It was cold and raining in St. Louis on March 16, the day the government first blew up a public housing project.

Despite the weather, some 500 residents of Pruitt-Igoe — about a fourth of its population — came to watch the dynamiting of one of the 33 high-rise buildings that crowd onto the 57-acre public housing site.

It was a sad and poorly dressed crowd, largely black and including a disproportionate number of children, that stood in the drizzle that afternoon to bear witness to the dramatic evidence of the federal government's severe problems with public housing.

Pruitt-Igoe once had a population of more than 10,000. Now, its 2,000 residents occupy only nine of the buildings in the project. Two more buildings have fallen since that first 11-story structure was demolished. And the government plans to slice off the top seven stories of an indeterminate number of other buildings.

This desperate, last-ditch attempt by HUD and the city of St. Louis to make Pruitt-Igoe once again livable will cost some \$38 million, about half of the \$75 million it cost to erect the 33 buildings less than 20 years ago.

Said Rep. John S. Monagan, D-Conn., "We are destroying it in order to save it. It sounds like something out of Jonathan Swift or, better yet, Voltaire. It's a satire on the public housing program, the ultimate proof that nobody wants it."

Monagan, chairman of the House Government Operations Subcommittee on Legal and Monetary Affairs, has reached equally depressing conclusions during investigations of government housing programs in seven cities — Boston, Mass., Charleston, W. Va., Chicago, Ill., Columbia, S.C., Dallas, Tex., Detroit, Mich., and Miami, Fla.

Poorhouse

The tragedy of the deliberate destruction is that all of Pruitt-Igoe's buildings are structurally sound, each on the average only 15 years old.

What is wrong with Pruitt-Igoe is not the buildings but the people who came to live in the 2,800 low-rent units.

By the late 1960s Pruitt-Igoe had become the unofficial poorhouse for the city. The neighborhood surrounding the project had been saturated with other subsidized housing

projects, and Pruitt-Igoe itself had become a magnet for the very poor and the problems of the very poor.

The project was built on such a massive scale that the social problems reached what Romney likes to call "a critical mass" that overwhelmed the capability of the local government to provide social services.

As the very poor began to dominate the rent rolls and the social services began to collapse, the working poor began to leave the project in droves. Into the vacuum poured a host of the worst urban ills — violence, vandalism, and drug addiction — all on a scale so great that the local government could not even maintain law and order.

Pruitt-Igoe is a worst-case example of the plight of public housing projects all across the land.

Brooke Amendment

The federal government has tried to accommodate social change in public housing with the Brooke amendment and other changes in the basic public housing law to reduce rents and provide federal operating subsidies for local public housing agencies. These amendments now are accused of making the situation worse rather than helping it.

According to the study by the House Appropriations Committee investigative staff, the amendments have helped turn the public housing program into a welfare program by "destroying the primary objective of providing low-rent housing on a businesslike-basis."

The report estimated that one-seventh of all public housing tenants now pay no rent, with one-fifth of those receiving "negative rents."

Compounding of Problems

Enactment and implementation of the low-income housing programs of the 1960s have served only to compound the problems already developing in the public housing program.

Because the new programs — particularly the 235 and 236 programs — really are controlled by private builders and investors, and because of resistance to subsidized housing in white areas of the center city and in suburbs, construction of the buildings has tended to concentrate in already poor and largely black neighborhoods, often near the grim and failing high-rise public housing projects.

And while actually helping the trend toward concentration of the poor in center-city neighborhoods, the programs also presented some of their poor clients with new problems they were unable to cope with. Specifically, the 235 program and the 221d1-223e combination made homeowners out of poor people, but did not equip them with the skills needed to maintain a home nor the cash needed for repairs. Thus arose the problem of abandonment of old buildings bought by poor people under the 221d2-223e combination — a problem now forcing widescale repossession by HUD in Philadelphia, Detroit, and other cities. Shoddy construction in many instances as well as lack of homeownership experience is contributing to premature deterioration of many structures built in the past three years under the 235 program as well.

But despite these failures, the programs of the 1960s have accomplished one of their key objectives: they have contributed greatly to a boom in homebuilding.

In 1960, subsidized housing starts — entirely for public housing — totaled just over 50,000. In 1968, with rent supplements contributing to the rise, starts on subsidized units had risen to just over 150,000. The big impact came with the 235 and 236 programs: in fiscal 1973, subsidized starts will total 681,000 of 2.1 million total starts, according to HUD projections.

At the same time, the political justification for the

low-income housing programs has been broadened. Until recently the programs have been viewed only as means to help poor people who otherwise could not procure decent shelter. Now they also are viewed as a key element in federal subsidies to the cities themselves, whose plight has steadily been worsening with the growing immigration of low-income people.

And the rapid growth of the federal spending on the low-income programs has created a big new constituency for subsidized housing in the private sector among builders, real estate brokers, mortgage bankers, and investors seeking tax shelters — all key intermediaries between the FHA and the poor. In fiscal 1971, when subsidized starts totaled 478,428, the private sector reaped \$8 billion in profits, according to a recent estimate in *Business Week*.

Defense of Programs

Like Congress, private groups — mortgage bankers and homebuilders, for example — always have defended the subsidy programs on grounds that they aided poor people in the cities, choosing not to stress the benefits that flow into their own pockets.

Bankers — Thus, Philip C. Jackson, Jr., a banker in Birmingham, Ala., who now holds the presidency of the Mortgage Bankers Association of America, told the National Mortgage Banking Conference in New York on May 9: "Of course, the federal commitment is massive, but so is the urban problem. True, the present subsidy system has produced losses which run into figures with lots of zeroes behind them. Even so, can we conclude that the federal commitment and the losses sustained are excessive, *when we know that these programs have been the principal weapon in the battle to preserve the nation's sick cities; and when we know that these programs are the only evidence of the public's willingness to do something about the frustration and hopelessness of those who were beginning to destroy the inner city?* (Emphasis Jackson's.)

"These programs answered the cry, 'Burn, baby, burn!' with 'Build, baby, build!'"

Homebuilders — The National Association of Home Builders of the U.S. offered a similar justification in testimony enthusiastically endorsing continuation of contract authority for the low-income programs during hearings on this year's HUD authorization bill.

Some NAHB leaders, however, are growing uneasy about that justification for the programs, and would like to develop an argument that would justify them as legitimate federal subsidies not to the very poor but rather to the upwardly mobile lower middle-class.

Romney

In his April 10 appearance before the Boland subcommittee, Romney talked of changing conditions in the inner city that have contributed to the failure of the housing programs.

"The people who are in there now in a significant way are not able to have the mobility that others have had in the past," he said.

In the past, Romney said, ghetto residents "knew who the criminals were and who the pushers were and the drug addicts and the prostitutes and so on, and the good people in the ghetto had control of the situation

"But now the other element has the upper hand in many of these areas, and that makes a big difference

"When I talk about the critical mass that is building up in some of the central-city areas, that is what I am talking about You cannot provide housing under those circumstances."

"The largest number of our repossessions deal with the unsubsidized, special-risk 221d2 program. That would work

all right in the suburbs when you deal with families experienced in homeownership . . .," he said.

"But in the center city, you are dealing with people with no homeownership experience at all, not even any experience in paying taxes.

"Plus that, the environment is different from the suburbs, with massive concentrations of social problems."

Faded Hopes

In the late 1960s, homeownership for the poor was regarded by many Democrats and Republicans as a bright new idea that might trigger a dramatic turnaround in the fortunes of the center cities.

Both parties were attracted by the idea: Sen. Charles H. Percy, R-Ill., campaigned on it in 1966, and President Johnson embraced the concept in 1968, the year Congress enacted the 235 program.

In 1969 and 1970, the Nixon Administration expanded on the idea by providing subsidies to enable public housing tenants to take title to their own units through payments of so-called "sweat equity."

But now, said Romney's aide for housing production issues, who did not want his name used, "The great hope of 1968 is dead — that if you gave the poor a home, they would develop pride and become like the middle class. We in HUD are just starting to realize that FHA works where it isn't needed — in the suburbs — and is a debacle where it is needed — in the cities.

"Some people now are saying that the needs of the country just have outgrown FHA. It was a middle-class support program for hard times, the 1934 child of the depression."

Policy Vacuum

"What do we do with the black, urban poor? That's the question and until we resolve it, the housing situation is going to get worse before it gets better."

So says Miles Colean, who has observed the development of federal housing policy in public and private capacities from the time he joined the FHA in its infancy in 1934.

That is indeed the question, agree other private and government experts, including Romney, Harper, Watson, Giaimo, Monagan, Ashley, and Rogg. But none of these men is able to provide any ready solutions to the housing problems or to the problems of racial integration lying behind them.

Romney himself can only point in the general direction the new policies might take.

"I am not ready to abandon the poor and the center cities just because they are a problem," he said in an interview. "And I don't personally believe that we should abandon programs designed to meet the people with the needs and designed to help the center cities with the problems.

"What we have to do is deal with them in new ways that are much more effective — and that would include finding ways to avoid confinement of critical masses of problem people."

Housing Allowances

The most widely discussed alternative strategy to production-oriented housing subsidies would provide so-called housing allowances to inner-city poor people — these would be cash grants or rent certificates which the poor could use to rent units in any part of the city. With the existing programs leading to increased concentration of the poor — and causing nationwide political scandals — the housing allowance approach commends itself to many politicians of both parties: Romney, Brooke, and Boland, to name just a few.

In theory, an allowance strategy would:

- promote mobility among the poor, by loosening the tie that binds them under current programs to certain projects in certain neighborhoods;
- save the government money because administrative costs would be cut, because many poor people would be housed in cheap existing units rather than in expensive brand-new units and because the need for government-subsidized construction of new low-income housing would be reduced;
- diminish racial and economic tensions attending construction of the subsidized housing projects in communities around the nation — since there would be fewer projects built and since the poor presumably would be moving into nonsubsidized units in these neighborhoods in any event.

But these theories remain very much untested — more hope than fact — although Congress in 1970 authorized a pilot housing-allowance experiment.

The money, \$10 million in fiscal 1971 and \$10 million in fiscal 1972, has not been spent by HUD.

Harold B. Finger, the department's assistant secretary for research and technology, who oversees the program, said that the tests must be carefully designed. In one limited experiment undertaken by Kansas City, an allowance approach did not promote mobility, he said.

Although Finger plans to begin allowance projects in the coming fiscal year (Congress is about to authorize \$25 million for fiscal 1973 housing allowances), he said it will take "at least" two years before "a go or no-go decision" could be made on the merits of the program.

Metropolitan Integration

Plans have been developed both at HUD and in Congress to reduce concentration of the poor by distributing housing subsidies and other federal program benefits on a metropolitan-wide basis, but they have been rejected out of hand because they implied racial and economic integration of the suburbs.

Romney's plan — which would have conditioned such popular items as water and sewer grants, in addition to the housing subsidies, on efforts to dispense the urban ghettos — was vetoed by the White House. Lacking enforcement tools, Romney now is embarked on an evangelistic mission to convince five major metropolitan areas that it is in the interest of the private sector and of suburban and state politicians to deal with center-city problems. The Total Option Process, as he calls it, seeks to promote adoption of metropolitan-wide "fair-share" plans for dispersal of subsidized housing.

In Congress, Ashley proposed a plan for distributing housing subsidy money to newly-created metropolitan-wide housing agencies, rather than to builders and local public housing agencies, which then would allocate the money among political jurisdictions according to a federally approved plan. The proposed was rejected by the House Banking and Currency Subcommittee on Housing in June.

Federal court decisions — most recently a May 6 ruling in Cleveland — have supported the dispersal of subsidized housing by ordering that new subsidized units be built in white areas of center cities or in the cities' suburbs.

And that trend in the courts threatens to stymie the programs because it runs squarely against the increasing resistance of white neighborhoods and suburbs to subsidized housing. "It leaves HUD in the center," said department general counsel David O. Maxwell, "We are damned if we do, and damned if we don't."

Local Veto

Maxwell said he now worries that Congress is about to reinforce the power of localities to veto subsidized housing

projects, and thereby intensify the concentration of racial and social problems in center-city slums.

After rejecting the Ashley amendment in May, the House subcommittee on housing took an opposite tack, belatedly approving an amendment to the HUD bill requiring local governments to approve the construction of any subsidized housing in their jurisdictions. Only public housing now requires approval by the local political body; the amendment would extend the requirement to rent supplements, 235 and 236 housing projects.

"The local approval provision is dynamite," Maxwell said, "and will reinforce the wall already surrounding the suburbs."

Carl A. S. Coan, Jr., top lobbyist for the homebuilders, said the amendment "would have the effect of killing the program in many places." The homebuilders' lobby will try hard to eliminate the provision, either in the full House Banking and Currency Committee, on the floor of the House, or in House-Senate conference. The Senate already has passed the HUD bill with no comparable provision included.

Future

The survival of the subsidized housing programs is threatened by high costs and scandals.

But few politicians who could help to kill the programs want to do so.

Thus, two Senators whose expertise and committee positions give them unique opportunities to expose the failures of the subsidy programs are reluctant to undertake major investigations.

Sen. Philip A. Hart, D-Mich., chairman of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Antitrust and Monopoly Legislation, already has held two rounds of hearings on allegedly corrupt dealings between the banks and the FHA in insurance of urban housing. Hart plans more hearings.

During an interview, Hart recited a long list of serious defects and scandals he had uncovered or expected to uncover in housing programs. But he clearly was reluctant to open up, for fear that he will kill the subsidies for the poor.

Sen. William Proxmire, D-Wis., who is among the most skilled of congressional investigators, could use either his position as ranking Democrat on the Senate Banking Committee or his chairmanship of the Joint Economic Committee to investigate the housing programs.

But Proxmire is reluctant to do so, says his chief assistant, Kenneth A. McLean, because he is afraid that any sensational exposure would only hurt the poor.

A top aide to House Speaker Carl Albert, D-Okla., said, "It is just a question of time until a big explosion. It's going to blow, but not this year. Republicans do not want to rock the boat and too many Democrats feel they are involved too." ■

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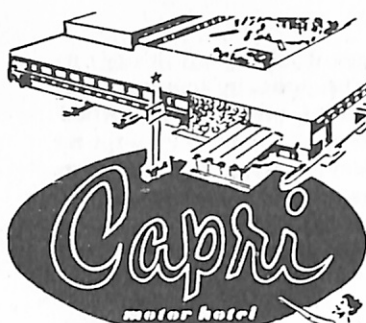
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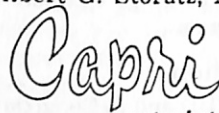


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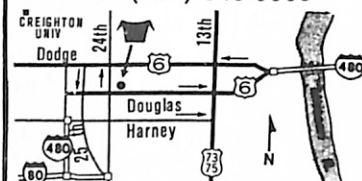
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SIMONE SIGNORET, TALKING OF LANGLOIS
in Truffaut's Film, "Henri Langlois"

/ Judith Rechter

Lightly fingering shadows
underneath her eyes, she touched on
Langlois. "I am old,

and I remember him very well." Her
face freeing itself of itself
as people's faces go
down, struck
down
by the fierceness
of my intentions, yours

her nails
cut short the better to
feel with, her
flesh, having
felt much feels more the inner
confusions not
having
the right
words, the
hands
begin moving, Langlois
and the years during the war

remembering him aloud,
with her hand she mentions herself a
thousand ways telling you
this, that, all
the time talking of
him, how

a woman reveals
the course of her life to you
without your having
asked, how
in the middle of telling you something else.

/ Gary R. Langford

THE WARNING

They passed the barbed wire
through the empty sockets
of his eyes.

He smiled because
there seemed nothing
else to do.

Then they passed the wire
through his mouth
and hung him up

as a warning
to all who came
searching after him.

WEEDS

The weeds cover all
lush August growth
green and thick
unsown unbidden they roam.

Troublesome warlike they bloom
sleeping catch-fly poison ivy water hemlock
witchgrass wild parsley white snakeroot
wild carrot black-eyed susan beggar tick.

Creep over the cinders clay cement blocks
through the abandoned tunnel in junkyards along the road
wild they run across fields and railroad tracks
growing above our heads, wind blistered
random
rank.

Thickening they decorate the emptiness
taller than shadows castor plant sun flower
rag weed golden rod this autonomous
jungle where the children
play
tiger.

In poverty's garden vines overrun
the tire patch sneaking cat land
dog urinal weeds of undisclosed origins
cage the winter while the children
paint
their savage faces.

Weeds travel without a passport
become a poor man's umbrella
she likes weeds that creep aggressively
to secret power holding sway amid their common family.

Like a weed her husband would pluck her
from his garden. She told her children once
they shouldn't say ugly.
He taught that word to them
pointing
at her.

Alexandra Grilikhes will soon be published in *The Mediterranean Review*, *Composites*, *Film Library Quarterly*, *The American Scholar*, and *Dance Magazine*. Gary Langford is an Assistant Editor of *Edge*, a magazine based in New Zealand, where he lives. He has been published widely in New Zealand and Australia. Judith Rechter teaches English at Meramec College, St. Louis, and has published poems in *Perspective*, *The New Magazine*, and *Poetry and Audience*.

/ Mark Perlberg

EARLY ONE MORNING

Until my walk this morning I had forgotten
that wind can be freighted with the scent of raspberries,

that things like ropes or an old pot on a porch
will creak in wind.

— A gull's shadow slides across the road,
ripples up the side of a house, and is gone.

Translated by Mark Perlberg and Lee Feigon

AN OFFICER'S TARTAR HORSE / by Tu Fu (713-770)

This is one of the Tartar horses of Ferghana.
Note its great frame, so lean, so angular.
Its ears rise up like pointed bamboo shoots.
Its hoofs are light as wind.
To a beast with such *esprit*
I could trust my life. With such a horse,
For whom ten thousand miles is a morning gallop,
I could face eternity.

/ Jack Tootell

LAST HOUR

At the last hour every clock stopped and every measurement of time
and there was no monument nor souvenir remaining nor any intelligence
to remember

the measurers. Galactic dust we were, and returned
to dust, or to a sullenly flickering clinker denser than lead.
But the process enclosed all dramas and was the drama:
the gathering of the faint gas of the galaxies, to a magnetic field,
to a blue star,
to a white star, to a yellow star hotter than any furnace,
to a red giant star fiercer than any conceit of flame,
when the planets having long been created, cooled themselves in space,
turning in their habitual ellipses.

At the last hour the enormous explosion, the nova,
the detonation of heat presently over, all things ended in fire
and the dark dwarf, the sun, shrunken, a blue ember
collapsed into that final nightfall
heavy, heavy, heavy, saturnine.

The dust, gathered into the destiny of fire, was fulfilled.
And the years of eternity, that had been watching so long
turned to the face of their Creator, and He,
having no footstool and no local Heaven any more,
regarded His losses with an incomparable calm.

/ William Virgil Davis

THE WOMAN IN THE TREE

A tall woman is perched on the limb
Of a tree. She is naked. Her arms hang
Down and sweep the damp ground. Her hair

Floats in the breeze. Her fingers feel
Along the length of her thighs. I watch
Her as she swings her breasts like lanterns

In the night. I watch as she gathers
Dark around her body, hanging in the air,
Until everything is folded in the dark.

In the morning we will both be gone.

STRING QUARTET

They sit, hunched and indifferent,
Over their instruments and pull
Sounds from the strings beneath
Their fingers. The music fills

The spaces around them.
They sit solitary and wan
And almost asleep. Except for
Their fingers they are four old men.

COWS LABOR HEAVILY

Cows labor heavily up the hill,
Their udders swaying
Beneath them, their brown eyes
Deepening into darkness.
An owl swings from the loft
Of the barn,
Circles low over the cows,
And roosts on the shoulder of night.

The cows do not notice.
They ruminate slowly
And step off into the dark waters
Of the barn.

/ Brian Swann

LANDSCAPE WITH TREE

If they chose to stand there forever sightless I'll
wait by this dark pool considering bream-fry
collect light's alms, sky tortured and reproved.

Some would call these meadows vague. I prefer infinite.
A slide of distance displaces a slide of grass
in a cow's lifted head. She moos at the emotion.

In this landscape the stone's mind crumbles trying
to make a beast from a mouth. Yet the men within
their blank world are eventually convinced that e.g.

Putting a cockatrice in a cage might be amusing: after
all, they say, something new isn't the same as innovation;
I add, continuity is only another kind of ending.

This was the tree that immediately came into my skull
as I felt something move at hands' tips: the tree
is not of wood; the tree is wood. The gate is of wood,
& the old mens' sticks are of ash, with white plastic tips.

If you look under the roots into gnarled dark this is
what you'd find: sandflies in a lion-mask a pig's
bladder a nail driven to the hilt a whole suit of skin
boots one with one without laces antlers two hands'
breadth a listerine bottle broken glass a bag of coal

/ Robert Joe Stout

BEFORE INTEGRATION

A man climbed through the snow
and took my hand. His face,
wrapped in a husk of flesh
prune-black and cracked

like an old wall, bled
beneath the blow my fist,
still clenched by his, thrust
soundlessly between his teeth

and there he ate, dances
in his one good eye praising
gifts that fingers give
and hunger, freezing, takes.

/ Stuart Silverman

THIS DAY

This day surpasses
even my wish.

Green shells float on the foam of trees.
The sun wears a new coat thick at the edge;
its yellow arms turn and turn
until it is all dance.
Looking down the street, I count the lines,
up to nine or ten
without taking a step.
Fence railings tap at my side
eager for a stick.
Centers bulge past my look
falling through painted slats.
The grass is greensick
on a hundred lawns.

These things, this day,
remind me of rituals.
I see the faces of men
drive past like gods.

Mark Perlberg's first book of poems, *The Burning Field*, was published in 1970 by William Morrow. He lives in Chicago where he is active in independent politics. Jack Tootell recently received half the Helen Bullis Poetry Prize, 1970, offered by *Poetry Northwest*. His poems have been published widely. Writing poems "has been an enormous advantage to him as it has prevented him from teaching summer school year after year." William V. Davis has had poems published in many journals, including *Poetry*, *The Nation*, *Shenandoah*, *Epoch*, *The Midwest Quarterly*, and *Trace*. His poems have been included in several anthologies, *The Best in Poetry 1969*, *New Generation: Poetry*, etc. Brian Swann has been published recently in *Poetry*, *Yale Review*, *Quarterly Review of Literature*, *Virginia Quarterly Review*, *Poetry Review* (London), and *Harper's Bazaar*. Robert Stout is a former journalist now writing poetry and fiction. He has been published in *The Rhode Islander*, *Christian Century*, and *Southern Poetry Review* among others. Stuart Silverman has recently been published in *Florida Quarterly*, *Northwest Review*, *TransPacific*, and *Rain* and has become poetry editor of *Unicorn*.

Correction: Vol. 8, no. 54 stated that William Douglas Elliott's poems would be included in *The Young American Poets, Second Selection*. This was our error. At the time, his poems were considered for inclusion.

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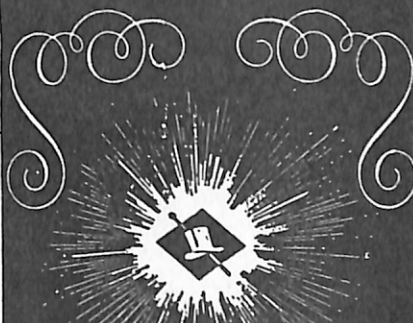
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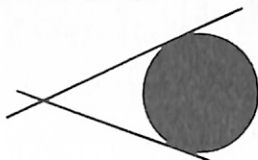
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THE RIGHT WING

An earlier issue of FOCUS/Midwest (Vol. 3, No. 6) carried a "Roster of the Right Wing and Fanatics" describing 45 organizations and its leaders located or active in Missouri and Illinois. The Roster is available at \$1 each. The following regular column keeps the information current.

AMERICAN SECURITY COUNCIL AND THE INSTITUTE FOR AMERICAN STRATEGY

The computerized letter-writers of the American Security Council and the Institute for American Strategy are pouring out a flood of fund-raisers to "opinion leaders" and other euphemisms of flattery. The message from both groups is the same: the U.S. is losing the weapons race with Russia.

Also, the letterheads show important interlocking. A recent ASC mailing, signed by John M. Fisher as President, features former Vietnam Ambassador Elbridge Durbrow high on the letterhead. An equally recent IAS mailing, signed by Durbrow as Director, shows Fisher as President and Chief Executive Officer.

The ASC letter asks funds to help its "Operation Alert" to "break through the media curtain" and suggests that \$450,000 will start it. Those sending money and signing a "declaration for peace through strength" will get their names on a "master declaration" to be presented to President Nixon.

Both groups, if they can be called separate, rely heavily on the technique of inviting donors to vote in an opinion poll. The IAS calls it a "peace poll" and explains that the film includes a request for letters expressing one's opinion as to whether the U.S. should "regain and retain a clearly superior strategic capability."

But there is one difference — gifts to the Institute are tax-deductible.

REP. PHILIP CRANE

According to the *Washington Post* (4/19/72) Rep. Philip Crane (R-Ill.) delivered a 10-minute discourse to the DAR on history and civics, which was notably uninterrupted by applause. Speaking without notes, the congressman managed to weave into his speech the Ten Commandments, the Stamp Act, the Pharaohs, Elizabeth I, John Locke, Alexander Hamilton, the Right to Property, the Founding Fathers, the Sermon on the Mount, Marbury vs. Madison, New Deal spending, George Santayana, Das Kapital, Cambodia, Nazi Germany, the Stone Age, Woodrow Wilson, the Garden Path, point of no return, re-

ordering of priorities, re-doubling of efforts, re-dedication of selves, re-newed commitment, the last full measure of devotion and the blessings of liberty.

FARM BUREAU

The American Farm Bureau Federation a four billion dollar business is pumping its wealth and influence into a national campaign to try to stop the farm workers movement. The union has responded in turn by launching an informational campaign on the Farm Bureau, trying to let people know just what these "small family farmers" are about.

The campaign was opened by picketing on May 9 at Farm Bureaus in over 40 cities, including the Missouri state office in Jefferson City and the St. Louis county office in Kirkwood.

The Farm Bureau has used its power by becoming a professional strike-breaker — recruiting, importing, and paying workers to break strikes. The United Farm Workers, AFL-CIO, charge that the Farm Bureau does not admit to membership nor does it employ Chicanos or Blacks.

In close alliance with the John Birch Society and the National Right to Work Committee, the Farm Bureau promotes legislation in the name of free elections and protections of the workers rights. Yet for 50 years the Farm Bureau bitterly opposed all legislation to protect the rights of farm-workers denying even the right to a minimum wage, unemployment insurance and basic health and safety standards.

The Farm Bureau has assets of over four billion dollars in 49 states and Puerto Rico. Profits come from its insurance companies, pesticide companies, fertilizer companies, oil companies. This wealth comes not from representing farmers, but from doing business with them. But unlike other business corporations, the Farm Bureau is tax exempt.

JOHN STORMER

The author of a book which exploded onto the right-wing scene in 1964 is now head of a new school in his home town, Florissant, Missouri, with 415 children through the twelfth grade. He is John Stormer, author of "None Dare Call It Treason," which he printed privately. More than 10,000,000 copies were distributed rapidly with the aid, acknowledged later, of the John Birch Society.

Facilities for his Faith Christian School and Academy were acquired by Stormer and others for \$315,000 at the bankruptcy sale of the Florissant 600 Country Club. The funds were raised, he says, in amounts of less than \$5,000 by prayer. ("It was just one miracle after another.")

The school is run on fundamentalist lines, and parents are asked whether they have accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Shortly after his publishing success,

Stormer surfaced as a Birch speaker, but he became more closely identified with Rev. Carl McIntire, speaking for his movement and traveling with the right-wing preacher. He has also spoken for Young Americans for Freedom and Dr. Billy James Hargis.

THE WHITE CITIZENS COUNCIL

"The Citizens Council," is the title of a new book, subtitled "organized resistance to the second reconstruction, 1954-64." It was written by Neil R. McMillen, a history teacher at the University of Southern Mississippi, who interviewed numerous Council officials and had access to the files of moderate and liberal white Southerners.

An exhaustive, footnoted and indexed book, it traces the organization of the (White) Citizens Councils and puts the movement in political and social perspective. One section deals with "race and the radical right," another with "the lily-white schoolhouse." (University of Illinois Press, 397 pages, \$7.50)

WOMEN'S LIB AND RIGHT WING

The organized right wing is opposed to the movements generally referred to as "women's liberation." A few of the more stock arguments against more rights for women can be illustrated as follows:

- The President of Happiness of Womanhood (HOW), Mrs. Jaquie Davison, appeared on the forum of Clarence Manion, a founding member of the National Council of the John Birch Society. Her message, for which she was interviewed by Manion's friend, Father Daniel Lyons, was opposition to women's liberation.

- The latest plea for funds from Dr. Billy James Hargis and his Christian Crusade comes in the name of opposition to the proposed Constitutional Amendment for women's rights which was passed by Congress: "I am writing you at this time about 24 words that could bring this nation to the brink of Hell. My language is strong, I know, but I am incensed. I wrote you previously about the sinister attack on the family. It is even more dastardly and coming sooner than I thought. How do you think I will react if my two younger daughters are drafted into military service when they reach 18, forced to live in the same barracks with male recruits and eventually assigned to combat duty? . . . How would you react if these girls were your daughters or granddaughters?"

- Additional opposition to women's rights is the League of Men Voters, organized to oppose what they call the "left-travelling League of Women Voters." With headquarters in Oroville, California, leaders of the organization include Walter Hintzen, immediate past President of United Republicans of California, the far-right of the GOP in that state.